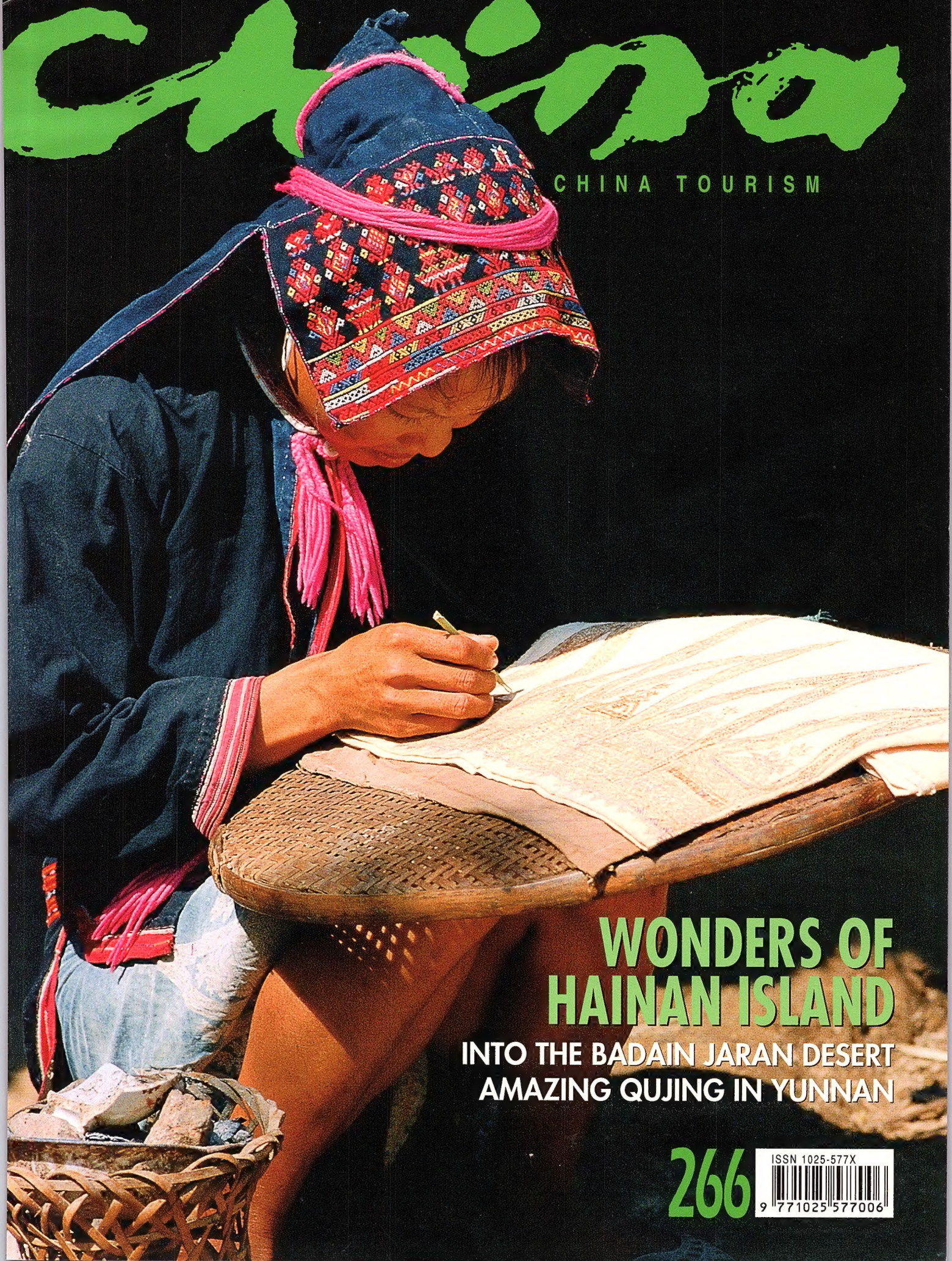




CHINA TOURISM



WONDERS OF HAINAN ISLAND

INTO THE BADAIN JARAN DESERT
AMAZING QUJING IN YUNNAN

266

ISSN 1025-577X



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龍 鳳 呈 祥 雙 喜 臨 門



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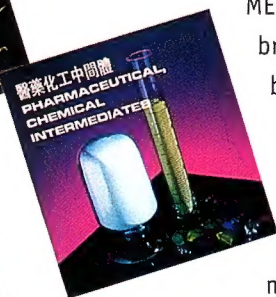
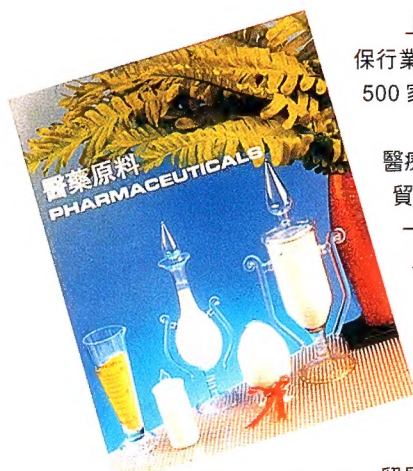
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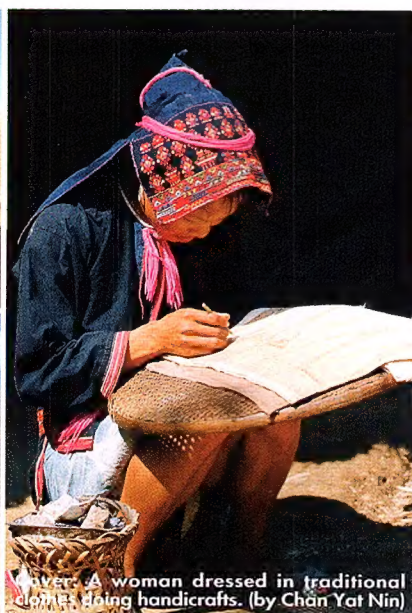
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MEHECOS is now composed of 2 subsidiaries, 5 branches and 3 import & export business divisions, and possesses a medical dressings factory in compliance with the GMP standard, a private warehouse covering tens of thousand square meters and a specialized river port. MEHECOS has overseas affiliates in the U.S.A., Germany, Pakistan. We sincerely welcome any business correspondence from abroad and home for possible business cooperation.



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Photos & article by Dianna Lau

Have you ever thought of escape from the heavy daily workload and immerse in a world of blue skies and vast seas? Hainan Island would be your best choice. You can stay in world-class luxurious hotels in Haikou and Bo'ao; be rejuvenated by refreshing fragrant massage; savour the mouthwatering, inexpensive delicacies; explore the unpolluted Crater Park, mangrove areas and Mount Wuzhi; and participate in various exciting aquatic activities in Sanya, the water paradise.

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Photos & article by Sheng Changfeng

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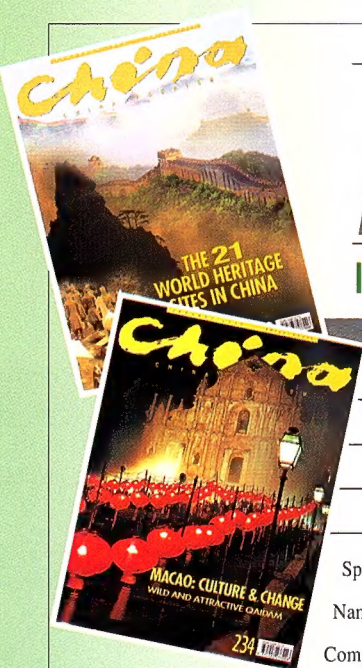


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Photos & article by Suolang Zhaxi

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24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2561 8001 Fax: (852) 2561 8057 2561 8196

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FROM THE EDITOR

THE MANY FACES OF HAINAN

Many of us indulge ourselves with Gauguinesque dreams of lush South Sea paradises girt with warm waters and feathery palms.... Well, there may not be many hula girls here but other than that there should be something for everyone on China's own tropical paradise — Hainan Island.

You might want to pamper yourself, to wallow in the sybaritic pleasures of a luxury hotel. On the other hand your idea of a good holiday might be more of an endurance course. For some people a holiday must be a physical test and / or spiritual quest and cannot be judged a success unless they become thoroughly dirty and exhausted and / or spiritually redeemed in the process.

For most of us the ideal lies between these extremes. This month we show it is possible to mix 'n' match and create one's own individual holiday from the wide range of what Hainan has to offer.

Loaf on the beach or adventure playground. Bright lights or ecotourism. Venture far from the madding crowd or join in with the fun people. Unashamed consumerism or cultural appreciation. Vegetarian or non-vegetarian. The choice is yours. Just bring your enthusiasm and imagination.

And if all else fails remember fruit on Hainan is very, very cheap. A pineapple for one *yuan*, a kilo of bananas for six *mao*. Life is good.

Photo by Dianna Lau



27th World Heritage Convention to Be Held in Suzhou

As announced at the 26th World Heritage Convention held in Budapest in Hungary in July, Suzhou, the renowned water-town in Jiangsu Province, has been selected as the site to hold the same meeting next year. This will be the first time for Suzhou to hold global conference, and is also the first time for China to undertake an international meeting of the highest level of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee since its entry to the World Heritage Treaty in 1985.

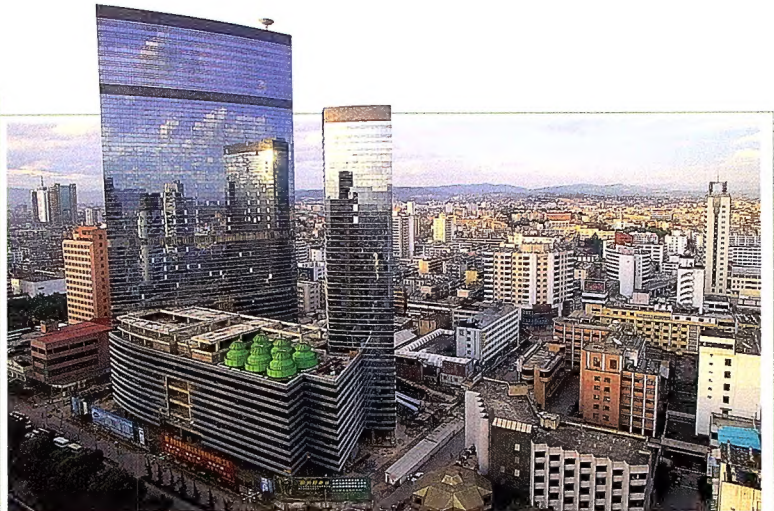
Despite Suzhou, other major Chinese cities including Beijing, Hangzhou, and Xi'an also applied for holding the meeting in last November.



Coastal Ecology City to Be Built in Fujian

The 50-sq-km city is going to be built in the area between the Changle International Airport and Songxia Deep Water Harbour in Fuzhou city, Fujian Province. Located in mid-southern part of Changle, the ecology city stretches from the Baihu Village in Zhanggang Town in the north to the Xiasha Coastal Tourist Resort in the south. The construction is expected complete within three to four years through different stages. Upon completion, there will be a new coastal zone, industrial area, and tourist area.

Recently, the industrial zone has provided 40 *mu* (2.7 hectares) for building standard-sized factories, and the other two areas will also release promotional plans to attract investments.



Highway to be Renovated

China will plough US\$ 360 million into renovating a stretch of the transnational highway linking China's Kunming with Bangkok of Thailand. Running through a mountainous area, the stretch covers 97 kilometres between Simao and Xiaomengyang in Yunnan Province. Construction will begin at the end of this year. A four-lane express highway will be built, which at present there is only a rough road.

Visa-free Access to Thailand

Holders of China's Macao Special Administrative Region passport will hopefully enjoy visa-free access to Thailand as of October. Revealed by the Macao Daily News, the two sides are recently negotiating the date to sign an official agreement on mutual exemption of visa requirements.

The articles in the to-be-cemented agreement have already been set and the Thai side is "very supportive".

Leifeng Pagoda Rebuilt in Hangzhou

With a total cost of 150 million yuan, the reconstruction project of the famous thousand-year-old Leifeng Pagoda has almost completed and is expected to be open to the public on September 25, 2002. Started in May 2001, the project strikes to rebuild a 70.7-metre-high, five-storied Leifeng Pagoda which is strictly adhere to the style and appearance of the original one, which collapsed 78 years ago.

First built in the year of 976 on the south bank of the West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, the name of Leifeng Pagoda was widely spread thanks to a popular folk tale, The Legend of the White Snake. It finally collapsed in 1924 after years of repeated lightning strikes, war damages and frequent theft of its bricks by superstitious people who believed the bricks had magic powers. It was also said the pagoda once housed the hair and skeletal remains of Sakyamuni. In March 2001, a number of ancient Buddhist relics were unearthed from the underground chamber of the pagoda.

The newly-built Leifeng Pagoda is seen to have great tourism potential, and the Hangzhou Municipal Government also plans to apply to the United Nations to put the new pagoda on the World Heritage List.

World's Biggest Military Theme Park to Be Set

China will spend five billion yuan to set up the world's biggest military theme park in Tianjin, a municipality close to Beijing. The seven-square-kilometre park will have such facilities as a man-made sand beach and a 3.3 million-square-metre expanse of water.

A former Soviet Union aircraft carrier, the Kiev, will become its main attraction. Measuring 274 metres long, 52 metres wide, 51 metres tall and weighing 24,000 tons, the Kiev was once regarded by western countries as "a lion on the sea". Over one million tourists have visited the vessel since it came to China last year, with a record of 10,000 visitors on a single day. The park will also display a range of weapons used by air, land and marine forces.



The Annual Mount Shibao Singing Festival

In every lunar eighth month (in September), there will be a singing festival held on the Shibao Mountain located in Jianchuan County, northern Yunnan. It is an important event among the locals. In that period, paths and roads leading up the mountain will be packed by visitors coming from everywhere in Yunnan, such as Jianchuan, Lijiang, or Dali. These people, belonging to the White, Yi, Naxi, or Pumi minority nationality, participate in the jubilant festival by dressing in their own traditional clothes.

The most interesting part of the festival is the antiphonal singing between a man and a woman. This is a challenge of the candidates' intelligence and singing skill. Singing in any kind of contents, the one who cannot continue the song loses at the game. A song sung in this way may be as short as a few hours or as long as a few days. The festival is a characteristic ethnic activity which tourists must not overlook.

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Experience Colourful Cultures in Xishuangbanna

Yunnan Located in southernmost part of Yunnan Province, Xishuangbanna is home to 13 ethnic national minority groups, such as the Han, Dai, Hani, Blang, Lahu, and Jino. The name "Xishuangbanna" comes from the Dai language, and can be found in its records in the 16th century. "Xishuang" means "12" and "banna" means "1,000 *mu* (67 hectares) of farmlands". The prefecture has a tropical rain forest climate which provides abundant sunshine, rainfall, beautiful subtropical scenery and unique folk-culture attractions. It also enjoys rich resources of flora and fauna.

Buddhist pagodas or buildings is also a highlighted attraction in Xishuangbanna. Tourists are recommended to visit the Octagonal Pavilion built in Jingzhen, the capital city of the prefecture. Located 16 km from the Menghai County seat, it was first built in 1701 as a place of Buddhist worship. The best example of Dai architecture, the pavilion is 22 metres in height and owns 31 sides. The Liusha (Flowing Sand) River nearby the pavilion was where the famous tragedy "bottle gourd letter" happened 200 years ago. Legend has it that in order to save the residents of Jingzhen from sufferings, the Nanmuhan Princess risked her life to deliver secret information by a bottle gourd. Unfortunately, this was later discovered and both she and her husband were killed. They were buried near the Octagonal Pavilion.



Escape the Heat in the Beidaihe Scenic Area

Hebei A famous and scenic summer resort located at the southwest of Qinhuangdao Municipality, Beidaihe is an alluring coastal village with a small-town ambience. The Beidaihe Beach Resort stretches 10 km east to west from the Yinjiao Pavillion to the mouth of the Daihe is an optimal place for travellers to escape the heat in summer and the masses.

In Changli, southwest of Beidaihe, there are also plans to convert a local bathing beach into another resort. The beach attracts millions of visitors from all over the world every summer.

People can also make visits to scenic spots around Beidaihe. Mount Lianfeng which backs onto the beach has two peaks covered by abundant green pines and cypresses. Looking down from the Sea-watching Pavilion at the top of the hill, one can see the misty sea in all its majesty and feel carefree and joyous. The Yunjiao Pavilion northwest of the beach is the best place to watch sunrise. And at the eastern base of Mount Lianfeng, the Lotus Stone Park house a quiet temple beautifully restored in 1979.

Besides, the Tiger Rocks is regarded by the locals as the central attraction of the middle beach. The rocks are composed of several huge rocks protruding from the sea like crouching tigers. Standing on one of these rocks, one can be fascinated by the beating waves and the vast sea.



China's Largest Science Library Opens

Beijing The country's largest science library, the Library of Chinese Academy of Sciences of the Academy of Sciences has recently opened in the Zhongguan District in Beijing. Owning more than five million books, the library is equipped with China's most complete and systematical documental and informational resources of fundamental subjects of natural science and hi-tech subjects. There are 800 seats provided for reading, a collection of 5.2 million books, and one million non-print documents. The spacious building is expected to receive 1,200 per day.

The library owns the advanced automatic and Internet services, in which it can achieve the automation of business operation, build networks among the computers, and distant delivery of documents. Readers will also be benefited at home by the 24-hour on-line service of the library. Website: www.las.ac.cn

Southern Music Applies for World Intangible Heritage

Fujian In June and July this year, Xiamen and Quanzhou cities in Southeast China's Fujian Province respectively made application to the UNESCO for an honour as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity of "Nanyin".

Having existed for more than 1,000 years, "Nanyin" (Southern Music) is a long-established ancient Chinese music popular in Fujian and Taiwan provinces and among overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and Europe. It originated in Quanzhou and had closely ties with the imperial music, Buddhist music, poetic rhythm and drama tune beginning the seventh century.

There are now two professional Nanyin musical bands in Xiamen and Quanzhou, and hundreds of folk musical groups. In Taiwan, there are also over 70 Nanyin musical bodies with most members coming from Quanzhou.

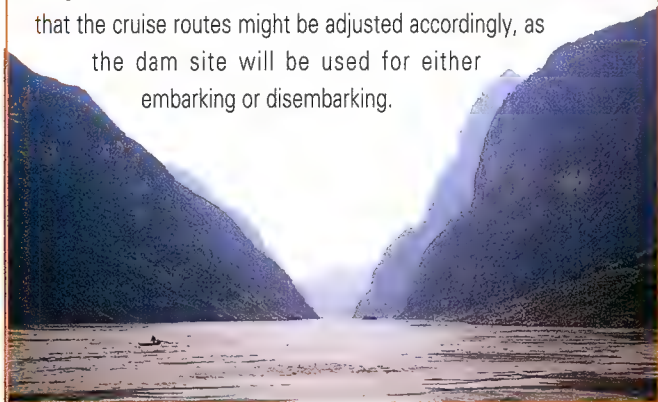
Grasp Time to Visit the Three Gorges

Yangtze Those interested in seeing the natural and cultural landscapes of the Yangtze must be ready as soon as possible, since on November 1, 2002, the Yangtze River will break its navigation for the second time, and remain closed until June 15, 2003.

More than 400 million Chinese are currently living in the drainage area of the Yangtze River, the third largest river in the world. It spreads through China's eight provinces, Tibet Autonomous Region and Shanghai. The area in Central China also boasts of its splendid ancient civilisation dating back to several thousand years ago.

Under the approval from the Central Government, the Three Gorges Hydro-junction Project officially began on December 14, 1994. The whole project will consist of a concrete dam of 3,035 metres long and 185 metres high, five-step sluice gate permanently open to navigation, hydroelectric power station and vertical ship lock after final completion.

The project is divided into three stages, the first stage lasting from 1992 to 1997 (preparation), the second from 1998 to 2003 (dam and power station on one side) and the third from 2004 to 2009 (dam and power station on the other side). In the second stage, cruise services will still be in operation, despite the fact that the cruise routes might be adjusted accordingly, as the dam site will be used for either embarking or disembarking.



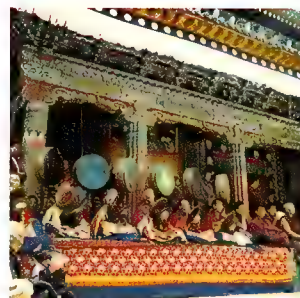
Ta'er Temple Reopens After Renovation

Ta'er After a major renovation lasting several months, the Grand Golden Tile Hall of the reputed Ta'er Temple in West China's Qinghai Province reopened to the public recently.

With 36 million yuan and 160 kg of gold allocated by the Chinese government, damaged wooden pieces were either repaired or replaced during the renovation. The entire hall has received anti-insect and antiseptic treatment.

The Grand Golden Tile Hall is one of the oldest and most important buildings in the Ta'er Temple, also known as Gumbum Lamastery. It is said to be built on the exact birth place of Tzongkhapa, founder of the influential Gelugba Sect or Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism and a tutor of the Panchen and Dalai Lamas.

The 17th century structure of the Grand Golden Tile Hall was found to be eroded by wind, rain and insects, with some of the walls developing cracks.



Assist-Card Arrives China

Service Assist-Card, the world's largest travellers' assistance network, was licensed on late July to Beijing Chinapack Anson Consulting Corp, and China National Packaging Import & Export Corp., a corporation with a 38-year history in the Chinese market. Under the agreement, the ASSIST-CARD products and services will be sold in the PLC, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. The network offers medical, legal and technical services as well as emergency transfers 24 hours a day, every day of the year and in more than 10 different languages in 87 countries.

Website: www.assist-card.com

China's Second Largest Freshwater Lake Expands

Human After a series of grain-for-water project, the Dongting Lake located in Central China's Hunan Province has expanded by nearly 20 percent in the past five years.

To spare local people their annual battle with flooding, the Chinese government decided to implement the grain-for-water project in 1998. Approximately 300,000 people formerly living around the lake have moved out to new residential homes. Their returned farmland will become wetlands, better adjusting to the local climate and protecting the lake's water quality, and drawing more species back to the lake. Aquaculture of local specialties such as turtles and pearls will be developed in the lake again.

Dongting Lake, spanning both naturally-endowed Hubei and Hunan provinces, used to be the largest freshwater lake in China from 1644 to 1825, before the imperial Qing Dynasty called on people in 1895 to move on to the islets of the lake and started massive land reclamation that slashed the area to 2,740 sq km.



Friendly Link Between Nanning and Guangzhou

Guangzhou Nanning With the signing of a mutual agreement by the mayors of Guangzhou and Nanning respectively, the two cities have promised to establish long-term cooperation system, so as to initiate developments of the two places in the future.

The only coastal provincial city in West China, Nanning plays an important role in collecting the economic circle between the southern and southwestern China. It is also the "bridgehead" of China to the East Union free trading district. After 20 years of the opening reform, Nanning has become a modern garden city, well-known as "China's Green City". Early this year, it also won the awards of "Living Environment in China".

All along, the cities of Guangzhou and Nanning share similar language and culture. They can complement to each other in the aspects of economy of the development of the society. The advantages of Nanning as a rendezvous of commercial commodities, a radiation centre, and a place providing rich sources and workforce is the first choice of the investment in West China for Guangzhou. In these years, many Guangdong enterprises have also set up in Nanning and gained satisfactory development.



Sister Peaks of Yellow Mountain and Jungfrauoch

Swiss The UN has declared 2002 International Year of the Mountains. To celebrate this event and to develop the ties between China and Switzerland, Jungfrauoch-the Top of Europe is now partnered with the Huangshan Mountain in China. Huangshan, or the Yellow Mountain, is the third "sister" of Jungfrauoch, after Eiger and Moench peaks. Both the Huangshan Region and the Jungfrau-Aletsch Region are UNESCO-World Heritages. Interested parties can access to this website: www.MySwitzerland.com.hk / www.sisttermountains.com.



Solar Energy Lights Up Ngari

Tibet With the last batch of solar power panels installed, all herdsmen and farmers in the Ngari Prefecture of China's Tibet Autonomous Region have accessed to electricity made from solar energy since this early August.

Standing 4,500 metres above sea level, Ngari abound with solar resources thanks to its thinned air and highly transparent atmosphere. It has up to 3,370 hours of sunshine annually. In the past, the prefecture was the only region in China with no stable power supply. The locals have to use ghee, a clarified butter, for lighting in their homes and temples handed down from their ancestors over the past 10 centuries.

Ngari has now become the first region in Tibet where all the people have access electricity. More than 60 power stations, big and small, with a combined generating capacity of 250 kilowatts, have been set up. Some 3,000 solar cookers and 12,500 solar panels have been installed in local households. According to local government sources, the use of solar power could save the prefecture more than 10 million yuan (about US\$ 1.2 million) a year in fuel expenditure alone.

Entrance Fees to Famous Tourist Spots Raised at Peak Season

Beijing Tourists travelling to the capital city may find entrance fees higher this year, for five places of special interest—the Imperial Palace Museum, Beihai Park, the Fragrant Hills Park, Beijing Zoo, and the Lama Temple—have raised their ticket prices on August 1 to cash in on the busy tourist season.

The ticket price of the Imperial Palace Museum during busy season, April 1 to October 31, raised from 40 yuan to 60 yuan (US\$ 7.3). For the rest of the year, the price will remain at 40 yuan;

Ticket prices for Beihai Park and Fragrant Hills Park have been raised to 10 yuan for the busy season, but will remain at 5 yuan for the slack season;

The Beijing Zoo raised its ticket price to 15 yuan in peak seasons, keeping its original 10 yuan price for the off season from November 1 to March 31;

The Lama Temple, or Yonghegong, hiked its ticket price to a flat 25 yuan year-round.

The increased income from the price hike will be used to maintain and protect these famous heritage sites and improve their facilities.



Stone Forest in Drizzle

Writer: Xiao Fuxing (肖復興)

Born in Beijing, Xiao Fuxing graduated from the Central Institute of Drama. He is the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of "People's Literature" magazine and the author of over 70 publications including novels, collections of short and medium-length stories, prose, reportage and theoretical treatises.

Travellers often follow fashion, favouring newly popularised scenic spots. Nowadays tourists in Yunnan are more than likely to visit Lijiang or Shangri-La while neglecting the Stone Forest of Shilin near Kunming. I have been to Yunnan several times but, even though I really longed to, had never been able to visit the Stone Forest. Recently, however, I had the chance and found it Yunnan's most fantastic sight and truly one of the wonders of the world.

On the drizzling autumn day when I paid my visit, the Stone Forest looked even more mysterious in its shroud of misty rain. Coming straight from the Jianfeng Pond to the Stone Forest, I was astounded by its vastness — 350 square kilometres — and I was embraced in its immensity. I had never before seen anything like this.

I don't know who dubbed it the Stone Forest, but that really is the most appropriate and precise name. It is true that mountains are nothing uncommon in Yunnan. But what other mountain rocks can compare with the stones here? The magnificent Stone Forest, however, exists in no other place in China or even the world. Forests are also common in Yunnan. Yet what forest here can equal the Stone Forest?

If the Stone Forest is really a mountain range, then it's one that has been transformed into a piece of abstract sculpture. On the other hand if it is a forest, it's an enchanted place created by an angel from a dream.

The Stone Forest has a special flavour in drizzle. Every dampened tree and rock looks

as fresh and dewy as if gently touched by the hand of the beautiful Ashima. They are like children of the ethnic Sani who stand in the rain to welcome you with open arms, so eagerly and lovingly. The misty rain draws a soft curtain over Shilin. The fantastic peaks and strange rocks are all enveloped by the drizzle and so softened to be almost boneless. They seem to possess veins but no texture, with tendons but no arteries, bodies but no clothes and with souls but no flesh. They look like comely stone carvings on sacrificial stands or beauties fresh from a shower, charming, sexy yet full of strength. They are so natural, harmonious and healthy that you can almost see them moving gently, dancing with the grace and charm of Isadora Duncan or Yang Liping. All the hardness of these steep rocks is gone, as if melted by the rain. The Stone Forest could be an age-old castle, awaiting a golden carriage bringing a prince and a princess to a grand ball, but only when the rain stops and all the lights are on.

Strangely, I clearly heard the sound of rainwater running around but couldn't see where the water went. The rain had clean washed the winding stone path in the hills as though the seven dwarfs from the fairy tale had come and worked eagerly to prepare everything ready for visitors. The barely visible springs falling from the hills above down to crevices below flowed more boisterously with the extra rainwater. They came from all directions, providing a happy accompaniment to the ever-changing scenery along the path. You could not help but feel your heart refreshed by the water and your

eyes brightened by the mountain view.

Stepping onto the highest peak, I looked around and instantly felt the Stone Forest's grandeur. The fine drizzle drifted gently over the mountain tops, veiling the indigo sky with a transparent gauze. Mist rose from the forest, creating a mysterious fairyland. The rain made the Stone Forest clean and fresh and the dewy breeze was the breath of the forest, refreshing and sweet. Looking at the bluish grey forest stretching endlessly into the distance, it was not difficult to picture it as a vast sea in remote antiquity. Otherwise, how could it be washed so clean, be so exquisitely carved, and surge so majestically. (In fact people have picked up fossils of corals, shells and clams here and we ourselves bought some shell fossils outside the park's gate.) It was easy to hear the sound of the sea, and then imagine the swelling waves suddenly solidifying in the air, forming a grand expanse of peaks towering sharply into the sky.

The Stone Forest below seemed to shimmer in the drizzle. Every peak was dripping with water and, all indistinct in the mist, underwent a myriad of changes in an instant. Sometimes they were exquisitely carved figures, perhaps a huge bonsai, or a soldier without a uniform but still wielding a sword, or a poet, pensive and nostalgic. All had an individual character yet each one moved me emotionally to an equal degree.

The sweet scent of osmanthus wafted from afar. In that precise moment, the slow fragrance drifting everywhere seemed to uniquely express the spirit of the Stone Forest.

FEATURE STORY





BLUE SKIES OF HAINAN ISLAND

Photos & article by Dianna Lau

"Should I forsake this heavy shell and sojourn where skies are blue..." — so goes the first verse of a popular Taiwan song describing the weighty aspirations of a tiny snail. Though no kin to snails, I was deeply moved, as the song reflects the yearnings of my heart. The heavy shell represents the constant stress that deprives us of a true appreciation of life. The song provoked introspection: should I abandon the manifold duties that bear down on me and search for beautiful skies?

No sooner thought than done, sure enough I discovered my bluest skies, the greenest waves and finest forests — all on Hainan Island.

Nanshan Buddhist Cultural Centre



Wuzhi Mountain



Dongzhai Harbour Mangrove Reserve area



Old Downtown District



Hainan Crowne Plaza Hot Springs Hotel



Sanya Bay



West Island



Large and Small Caverns



Lecheng Island



Bo'ao



Dadonghai Tourist Area



Recommended Itinerary

- Day 1: Arrive at Haikou, recreational activities at the Hot Springs Hotel (stay in Haikou)
- Day 2: Tour Haikou and local places of interest (stay in Haikou)
- Day 3: Travel to Bo'ao Town in Qionghai, rest at the hotel (stay in Bo'ao)
- Day 4: Lecheng Island (stay in Qionghai)
- Day 5: Tunchang Crystal Mine in the morning, Hainan Provincial Ethnography Museum at midday (stay in mid-Wuzhi Mountain)
- Day 6: Climb Wuzhi Mountain and visit local places of interest, Sanya in the afternoon (stay in Sanya)
- Day 7: Dadonghai, West Island and Sanya Bay (stay in Sanya)
- Day 8: Nanshan Buddhist Cultural Centre, Large and Small Caverns, the Remotest Cape of the Earth, etc. (stay in Sanya)
- Day 9: Departure (after shopping!)

Expenditure for one person

- Transport: Hong Kong - Haikou - Sanya HK\$ 2,260 (less if you don't follow the Itinerary but reserve air tickets and hotel rooms only). Contact the China Travel Service (Hong Kong) Limited (CTS). Tel: (852) 2851 1700
- Intra-Provincial Transport: 350 yuan (mostly bus)
- Accommodation: 2,500 yuan (Reservations through travel agencies provide discounted rates. Two travelling together reduces rates by 50%. Accommodation over 50% cheaper in non-5-star hotels.)
- Dining: 700 yuan
- Activities: 800 yuan (including water sports)

5 FEATURES OF HAINAN ISLAND :



Olives

1 Hainan Province is the southernmost part of China, the country's only tropical island province

The third largest house province of overseas Chinese, after Guangdong and Fujian 2

3 The Bo'ao Asia Forum in Bo'ao, Qionghai, is the first international organisation headquartered in China since the founding of new China half a century ago

The only settlement of the Li nationality in China 4

5 The province with the highest quality air, water and environmental indicators in China



A woman of Li nationality

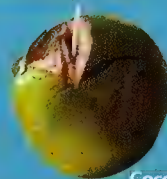
15 REASONS TO TREASURE HAINAN ISLAND :

1 Deep blue skies

2 Clear water and soft sands

3 High oxygen content in its air

4 Plenty of cheap fruit, e.g. coconuts, 1.5 yuan; pineapple, 1 yuan; bananas, 0.3 yuan for 500g



Coconut

5 Vendors at wayside stands taking a noon siesta

6 Relaxed atmosphere at the Old Dad Teahouse

7 Only province with toll-free highways in the entire country 8 Numerous low-priced Internet cafes (2 yuan/hour)

9 Numerous public telephones or IC telephones

10 Warmth evoked by shop assistants who call women customers "Auntie"

11 Wave your hand wherever you want to take buses in Sanya

12 Photogenic local people

13 Never-crowded buses

14 Sweet "Jeshu" mineral water (1 yuan per bottle)

15 Forest cover exceeding 51%



8 THINGS TO BE AWARE OF ON HAINAN ISLAND :

1 Buses in Sanya making time-wasting detours to pick up more passengers

Certain run-rate hotels switching off air-conditioning at midnight 2

3 Difficulty in finding suitable restaurants for a one-person meal for single travellers

Shops in Sanya airport not equipped with credit-card machines 4

5 Litter scattered all over Wuzhi Mountain

Exposed sprinklers on the public beaches-unless you enjoy public showers 6

7 Protected rare coral sold openly in the tourist areas of well-known beaches

Thieves on some buses who snatch passengers' belongings 8



Site of the Boao Asia Forum



Old Dad Tea



A Tuesday in April. After my usual busy day, I dash to the airport to catch an overnight flight to Hainan Island. A quick meal and I clear customs as speedily as possible, only to hear the last call: “Ms Liu Fengqun, the last remaining passenger for flight CZ 3078 to Haikou, please board immediately. The plane is about to take off!” Embarrassed, I dart for the gate and board with a thumping heart and an ache in my stomach.

A Heavenly Spa

There is no doubt that more and more city people are going for massages and spas to relieve the pressures of everyday life. Spas have sprouted like mushrooms after rain, providing all types of stress-alleviating treatments like aromatherapy, lithic massage, herbal flower baths.

Most customers have to give careful consideration to the price.

This writer, however, believes that quality treatments require specialist therapists and serene surroundings to best relieve stress.

Some people seek spas in Thailand, Japan and even Australia. I only journeyed as far as Hainan Island, and discovered pleasant natural settings like blue skies, white clouds, green mountains and turquoise seas, as well as the Hainan Crowne Plaza Hot Springs Hotel. This hotel was honoured as “China’s Largest Resort Hotel” and the “Largest Indoor Hot Springs Spa in the World” by the Guinness Book of Records in July 2001.

“Welcome, Miss Lau!”

Arriving in Haikou around 8 p.m., I boarded the hotel’s shuttle bus and 20 minutes later reached the hotel. The grand main building and the Tea Tree Spa of the 1,000-room hotel are styled after European castles.

“Welcome, Miss Lau!” the attendants greeted me with smiles. I

A DIFFERENT LIFE IN **HAIKOU**



was pleased at their knowledge of my name as well as the fluency of their English.

I was fortunate to get an upper room facing the sea, with a bird's-eye view of some of the hotel's major facilities: the European-style outdoor cafe, the Pulau Dewata-style swimming pool, the Thai Bar, and the long stretch of beach. The bathroom delighted with accessories reflecting the hotel's natural and healthy style. Take a bath with a sea view, the tub sits right next to a large picture window.

Though I arrived at night, and was travelling alone, I still had an exciting programme ahead of me, availing myself of the services of the world's largest indoor spa.

No Lack of Guests, but are there Free Rooms?

I entered the spa, five-storeys with a floor space of 6,200 square metres, at half past nine in the evening. An attendant provided an

Previous page: West Island in Sanya.

1. Bathing in flowers, a newly developed way to alleviate stress.
2. The luxurious Tea Tree Spa in the evening.
3. A seaside bar with ceiling fans and high-legged chairs, a good place to meet friends at dusk.
4. The largest hydrotherapy centre in the world.
5. The top-notch flower bath and fragrance massage service room.

introduction to their massage and spa features on a computer screen. For massages, there are options like aromatherapy, foot massage in Chinese, Japanese or Thai styles. If you like baths, there is a range of scented baths, Chashu (Tea Tree) baths, and herbal medicinal baths. Also offered are huge hot mineral springs pools, jacuzzis, steam rooms, saunas, beauty salons, aerobics centres and health cafes. Prices, from several hundred to more than a thousand yuan, are rather high. However, during certain grace periods you can enjoy body massages, jacuzzis and steam rooms for under 100 yuan, but you may not achieve total relaxation due to the short time and the crowds. For

A DIFFERENT LIFE IN HAIKOU



the best relaxation and enjoyment choose the complete four-hour-long package of spa therapy, it is the most expensive but lets you use as many types of mineral hot springs at the Centre as you wish.

Though the economy may be in recession and money tight, a good spa never worries about a lack of guests, its only concern a lack of rooms and massage therapists to meet the demand.

Enjoy "Being Manipulated by Others"

I chose the traditional Chinese-style massage, at 400 yuan for 50 minutes. Ms Katie, the therapist, was engaged by this hotel after an intensely competitive hiring process. She learned new skills from specialised Japanese masseurs before taking up the post and had to learn English.

Leading me to a secluded second-floor massage room, Katie first attended to my needs with a kettle of special tea that soothes and helps eliminate toxins from the body. The massage started after the tea. Lying on the bed, I gradually found myself lulled into a half sleep by the music, low lights and surrounding fragrances. The masseur's hands moved with a combined firmness and gentleness almost as skillfully as precision tracking technology. I never knew that bones and joints could produce so many odd (yet painless) noises — nor did I ever imagine I would enjoy "being manipulated by others". Seldom have I had the opportunity to behave like such a lazybones, do nothing but

relax, without sweating over the deadlines and daily details that usually crowd my life.

After the 50-minute massage, Katie gave me an additional 10-minute treatment on my shoulders, and kept advising me to change daily habits and not to continue to think of work after work. I must allow the body enough time for relaxation, otherwise even having daily massages would not help.

Rest to Your Heart's Content

I rose early the next morning, in high spirits. Putting on my swimsuit, I took a buffet breakfast at the open cafe, then swam vigorously. Getting out from the Baroque swimming pool, you can walk the endless beach and enjoy the breaking waves, or go for a drive along the beach. When tired, just lie on a wooden deckchair on the beach and have a nap, soothed by a sea breeze, under coconut trees that shade you from the burning sun. Don't consider this a waste of time, but instead rest to your heart's content. You won't be able to afford such "luxuries" when you get home.

Day 1

Transport: Fly from Hong Kong, Shenzhen or Guangzhou to Haikou; one-way tickets are 1,070, 610 and 620 yuan respectively. Shuttle buses run from the airport to the city proper from 6:00 a.m. until the last flight at night. (15 yuan, 30 minutes).

Or take a boat from Hong Kong (10:00 am on the 3rd, 7th, 12th, 15th, 19th or 26th of every month), Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Beihai, or Zhanjiang, to Xiuying Port, Haikou. Inquiry no: (898) 6535 1557

Accommodation: Crowne Plaza Hainan Spa & Beach Resort

Address: 1 Qiongzhan Avenue, Qiongzhan New District, Hainan
Tel: (898) 6596 6888, Website: <http://www.crowneplaza.com>
Charge: 600 yuan / Standard room (contact Hong Kong CTS for air and hotel reservations. Tel: (852) 2851 1700)

Activities: The hotel has a wide-range of facilities such as spas, massages and water sports.

Dining: The hotel boasts fine cuisine with Chinese and Western restaurants and bars (the Agu Noodles are a must-try).

Shopping: There are many souvenir shops at the hotel (but there is better shopping downtown).

Clothing: Dress casually, all day, for a 100% sensible and enjoyable holiday.

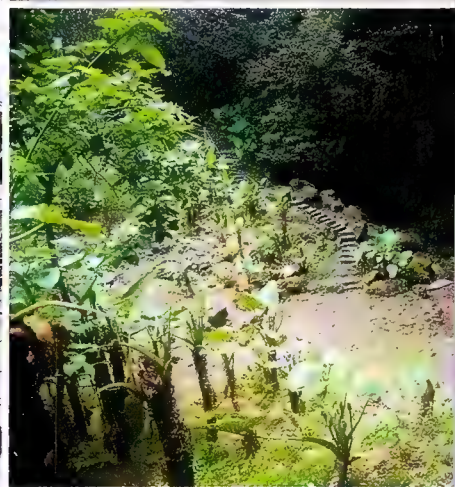
Advice on Aroma Therapy :

- All scented oils have their own essences, so be careful about the quantity you use, especially of those involving the herbs Sage and Fennel, which may have toxic effects.
- Avoid usage of oils from the citrus family, such as Bergamot, Lemon and Orange, prior to sunbathing, otherwise UV rays may promote the growth of freckles.
- Pregnant women should abstain from using oils that disperse toxins and water from the body, such as Basil, Rosemary and Peppermint, especially during the first five months of pregnancy.




1. Seawater merges with the water in the swimming pool.
2. The spacious cafe facing the sea, providing music performances in the evening.
3. Beautiful landscaping at the Hot Spring Hotel, made by a Thai designer.

A DIFFERENT LIFE IN **HAIKOU**



1. The Old Downtown District.
2. Boating in the mangrove forest.
3. The bottom of Maanling Crater.
4. The Five Men Temple in Haikou City, an ancient complex commemorating five historic figures exiled to Hainan during the Tang and Song dynasties.



I left the Hot Springs Hotel and was yanked back to reality, to a more normal life and the need to find less expensive accommodation. I found touring Haikou all by yourself is not that easy. The sun beat down, showing no mercy as I lugged my bags on my shoulders. I was soaked in sweat. Fortunately I managed to find cool and pleasant places near Haikou such as Maanling Crater Park and Dongzhai Harbour Mangrove Reserve, and saved my tour of the Old Downtown until after sunset.

The Maanling Crater Park

The quickest and most comfortable way to Maanling Crater Park (Huoshankou Park) from downtown Haikou is by taxi, only a half-hour ride from the furnace-like city centre to the volcano with its stimulating breezes.

Ecotourism for geological and forest explorations has become popular over the last few years. Visiting the remains of volcanic activity in northern Hainan Province is a feature of geological exploration. There are more than 50 extinct volcanoes in Shishan, Qiongzhan City, formed by eruptions 27,000 to one million years ago. The Maanling Crater, at 222 metres, is the highest. It takes only a quarter of an hour to reach the top and catch a panoramic view of Qiongzhou Straits and Haikou. Climbing down the steps into the enormous crater, 130 metres in diameter and 69 metres in depth, you see a variety of ferns and bushes. The fused lava at the entrance removes any doubts about this being a primeval tropical forest.

In addition to fashioning unique landscapes, volcanic eruptions have direct impact on people's lives. The folk of Shishan town rely on volcanic rock for building houses and roads, as well as for millstones, stone mortars, sculpture and potted landscapes. All this may be seen at Crater Park. It is also a good idea to pick up some volcanic rock fragments (five yuan per piece) at the souvenir shops.

The Dongzhai Harbour Mangrove Reserve Area

We have studied the environmental importance of mangroves from textbooks, but direct observation is more fascinating, especially at a tropical locale such as Hainan Island.

The Dongzhai Harbour Mangrove Reserve Area is the first of its kind in China and one of the seven major wetland reserves in the world. Its more than 4,000 hectares boast mangroves of 41 species in 23 families (in the entire world there are 81 species of mangroves in 23 families). There are many kinds of birds and marine creatures living peaceably within the mangroves.

You experience the mangroves' benevolence when boating

through the groves in extremely hot weather. The summer listlessness you brought with you from the city is immediately dispelled. Without the mangroves and the moderation of temperatures, there would be no moist breezes, nor the pleasant birdsong of hundreds of kinds of migrant and aquatic birds.

The Old Downtown District

Less than a quarter of an hour by foot from the modern city centre is the old downtown, consisting of Deshengsha Road, Xinhua Road, Zhongshan Road and Boai Road. It is not very conspicuous, and its deeply buried charms require time to truly discover. The old buildings were built in the "colonial style of Southeast Asia", by local Chinese merchants in the 1920s and 1930s. Different from the renovated buildings in Guangdong, this architecture has retained its original flavour with both European and Asian features. Make the most of the beauty of that old yet doomed downtown skyline, quickly changing with the onset of modern structures of steel and glass.

Day 2

Transport: Free shuttle bus from the hotel to Pearl Square in the downtown area, and find accommodation only a 5-minute walk away at the Postal Tower. Taxi from downtown to the Crater Park. (45 yuan, 30 minutes) Bus from downtown to the Dongzhai Mangrove Forest. Get off at Wugongci, walk to Honghucheng Avenue and take a bus to Qukou. (4 yuan, 1 hour) A short ride in a small motor vehicle to the entrance of the mangrove area. (2 yuan, 5 minutes).

Accommodation: Postal Tower (Youdian Dasha)

Address: 20 Nanbao Road, Haikou Tel: (898) 6677 8251

Rates: 138 yuan / standard room (air-conditioning on the whole night)

Activities: Crater Park in the morning (25 yuan), Dongzhai Harbour Mangrove Reserve at midday (5 yuan). Take a ride in a 4-person yacht (60 yuan), and wander the old streets in the evening (no charge!).

Dining: Breakfast — distinctive Hainan refreshments at the Old Dad Teahouse opposite Postal Tower;

Lunch — Shishanyang Hotpot, one of four most famous dishes in Hainan (the others are Wenchang Chicken, Jiaji Duck and Hele Crab), near Huoshankou Park; or go to the Mangrove Forest Seafood Restaurant for famous "Qukou Seafood" (black crabs, cream crabs, blood clams and prawns).

Dinner — Night market on Daying Road, in front of the hotel, for different kinds of hotpot; or China Cuisine Street on Jinlong Road for foods from China and around the world.

Shopping: Pearl Square, Wanfulong Supermarket and Jingrun Pearl Shoppe are ideal places to buy all sorts of Hainan specialties. In Crater Park you can buy exquisite lava souvenirs.

Clothes: Summer clothes, sun-block cream or parasols are necessary.

! Ask the service counter how to operate the air-conditioning if checking into less-expensive hotels; some of the hotels will turn off the air-conditioning to save electricity.

BE A RICH PERSON FOR ONE DAY IN Bo'ao

Believe it or not: I'm sending an e-mail from a personal computer in the hotel room. Next to me is my room-service dinner — Hainan Chicken Rice. It's quite a pleasure to have dinner alone in one's room here because from the balcony you can watch a Russian dance performance in the swimming pool. Or you can relax in the bathtub while watching TV through the big window of the bathroom. Life can be like this...

Unusual Guests and Unusual Prices

To be honest, this was my first stay in a hotel that provides guests with personal computers. This luxury cost me over 1,000 yuan a night, compared to my previous lodging at slightly over 100 yuan. I needed time to adapt myself to the change, both mentally and financially.

In February 2001, the Forum for Asia held its grand inaugural ceremony in the town of Bo'ao in Qionghai, Hainan Province. Nearly 500 high-level VIPs including prime ministers from 26 Asian countries and Australia attended. The Bo'ao Forum for Asia is the first China-based international conference of its kind since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

I wanted to scrutinize the places that received these important people. I wondered how an ordinary hotel could shoulder such a responsibility.

Full Occupation of Hotel Rooms during the Holiday

I was lucky to arrive in Bo'ao before the May Day Holiday. All rooms had been reserved for the holiday by visitors from Beijing and Shanghai. Consumer power within China now is astonishing.

I bussed to Qionghai, then took a half-hour taxi ride to Bo'ao. This city is situated on the estuary of the Wanquan River, the mother river of Hainan. Along the way were living landscape paintings of undulating countryside, coconut trees and ancient villages. On that bright sunny day, I saw beauty changing from grandeur to gentleness. All the hotels along the coast command spectacular views.

As soon as I entered Bo'ao Square I felt as if at a famous tourist site. Before me were a group of tourists who had come especially to see where the Forum had taken place. They took souvenir photos under a white tent after dishing out 20 yuan, then scurried for their bus. Some tourists paid 30 yuan for a ride in a yacht to scenic spots along the Wanquan River, such as Yudai Beach, Shapo Island, Nanhai Goddess of Mercy and Yuanyang Island.

At the end of the square is the main hall of the hotel complex. The magnificent furnishings dazzle every visitor's eyes. From the lobby right down to each room, every detail was carefully considered and arranged, from the vast luminous ceiling to the minutest aspect of

interior decor such as the arrangement of antiques. One must not forget the hotel's impressive professional service.

The furnishings in each room prove that you get what you pay for: the personal computer, the 24-hour-a-day hot-tub, the cozy living-room and the mini-bar. The huge balcony draws one's attention. From here one can view the riverside scenery and the swimming pool. Hotel facilities include the hot springs pool, fitness centre, business centre, Chinese and Western restaurants, and the bar.

I'm an easily pleased guest. I stayed in bed, either using the ultra-ray keyboard to log onto the Internet through the television set or watching a blockbuster film at night. I swam in the morning. I began to feel that Heaven was being especially kind to me.

Of course there were many more people happier than I. No small number rode in their personal cars to the golf course. A few people, scholarly types or valuing privacy, had reserved villas on a small island. Besides the club and restaurant, people were attracted by the artificial beach and the private swimming pools. A guest can enter the pool right from their balcony at the villa. The service and security are of course very good. No doubt this place becomes the temporary headquarters for senior state leaders from different countries when they take part in international conferences here.

Day 3

Transport: Bus from Haikou East Bus Station to Qionghai (earlier called Jiaji town), (27 yuan, 70 minutes). Taxi to Wenquan Hotel on the golden beaches of Bo'ao. Time: (45 yuan., 30 minutes).

Accommodation: Hot Springs Hotel along the golden beaches of Bo'ao
Address: 8 Jinhaian Road, Bo'ao, Qionghai, Hainan Province
Tel: (898) 6277 8888
Website: <http://www.boao-golden.com.cn>
Rates: 1,680 yuan / deluxe double room (enjoy a discount by reserving through a travel agency; the Hong Kong CTS also organises tours to Bo'ao).

Activities: Visit Bo'ao Asia Forum site, yacht ride on the Wanquan River, use hotel jacuzzi pool, water sports, golf, fine cuisine, etc. (also the Wanquan River Floating activity. (half-day for 138 yuan).

Dining: Dine out at one of the Chinese and Western restaurants or bars in the hotel, or the seafood restaurants outside the hotel.

Shopping: Shopping Centre at the hotel (reasonable prices for quality clothing and slightly higher prices for jewellery).

Clothes: Swimsuits are a must. Sun block, protective clothes and parasols are recommended.

T: The switch for the air-conditioning in the hotel room is connected to the balcony door. If the door is left open, the air-conditioning in the room turns off, to prevent wastage of electricity.



1. The balcony offers a view of Wanquan River and the hotel swimming pool.
2. The golf course, several minutes ride from the hotel. A special bus takes you to the course.
3. The guest room provides comfort and leisure.
4. In the evening there are two Russian baller performances beside the swimming pool.
5. The villa complex near the hotel on an island, with top-notch facilities and security guards.

CONTINUING A DREAM JOURNEY



in the lower reaches of the Wanquan River, 600 years ago it was the seat of Lehui County, and is "home" for a great number of overseas Chinese. An old street runs the length of the island, and the population is around only 1,000. People here enjoy peace and stability and don't need to lock their doors at night....

As it is not far from the city of Boao, I paid the island a visit.

I lacked up-to-date information on the small island presuming it would not be too remote and undeveloped. I thought there would be a decent pier where I could deposit my luggage, so that I could freely go sightseeing on the island. When I left the hotel, I took my luggage with me. I stopped a small motor vehicle and asked the driver to take me to the ferry at Chaoyan

Village. The driver, puzzlement written all over his face, asked, "Why are you going to Lecheng Island carrying all that luggage?" "Sightseeing!" He hesitated quite a while before finally starting the engine.

1. The simple residences of Lecheng Island.
2-3. The woman driver also looks for transparent crystals.



Although the luxury life has a strong appeal, I prefer the simple joys and happiness ordinary people share together, just like the scenery I have seen and the warmth that I have experienced on my long journey alone.

Looking for Lecheng Island

From some tour brochures, I discovered Lecheng Island. Situated

Returning Successful Overseas Chinese?

While I enjoyed the primitive idyllic scenery along the way, I eventually realised I didn't quite fit in with the surroundings. I had to imagine myself to be an overseas Chinese returning to Lecheng, carrying fashionable "goods" from the outside world. Twenty minutes later, we reached the riverside. Several men were playing cards in a makeshift store. When they saw me, their eyes seemed to shine suddenly. I tried my best to look calm and collected, and dragged my luggage to the small store. I stole a march on the men by saying to one of them, "Brother, please keep an eye on my luggage. I'll be right back." Without giving him a chance to say a word, I left for the ferry.

Don't Easily Believe Others!

I embarked and the boat left the pier. There were two other passengers, both island residents. They were curious. Within minutes, we arrived. One passenger, an elderly man, could not help asking, "Where are you from? Alone? What have you come here for?" Not wanting to shock him by saying Hong Kong, I told him Guangzhou and that I was sightseeing. My explanation surprised him greatly. "A

young woman arrives here alone to go sightseeing? Don't you know the world is dangerous?" I smiled and didn't answer but continued to walk beside him in the scorching sun. He added, "How can I feel at ease if I let you wander about alone? If you want to go sightseeing, I'll show you around. I've seen a lot of the outside world. You should not believe others so easily!"

A Photographer for a Day on Lecheng Island

I saw a straight path lined with coconut trees, orchids, houses, and cats, dogs, chickens and ducks. Other than the whispering wind there was no sound, as if the whole world had stopped running. The old man was true to his word and showed me around the Temple of the Town God, the Chen Family Temple and the village primary school. He took me to his home on the old street lined with simple houses built of stone or black bricks and tiles. All the doors of the houses were wide open while the inhabitants took their afternoon naps. The old man woke his wife, who greeted me warmly. When the old man saw my camera, he had an idea. He told me many island families had little chance to have their pictures taken, especially the elders. "If you don't mind, would you please take some pictures of them, and send the photos to me after you develop the film?" Of course I did not mind. In the burning sun, on an empty stomach and with my head spinning, I followed the old man through every household and became the island's temporary photographer. During the foray, I found this place peaceful. Although there was not much in the way of scenery on the island, the warmth between people would have been hard to find in any kind of star hotel.

An Adventure at the Crystal Mine

In Qionghai I bought at random a map and, to my great excitement, discovered on it a crystal mine in Tunchang County, not far from the city of Qionghai.

My love for crystals is beyond description in any language. When I see a piece of crystal that I like, my heart skips a beat, my face flushes and my spirits soar, as if I had met an old friend after a long separation. (Actually, the main element in crystal is silicon dioxide, similar to the human body. Crystal and the human body have a similar vibration frequency and magnetic field. The slight radiation of crystals can influence the human body, and a sensitive person can communicate with them. Believe or not, it's up to you.)

Taking an Adventure for the Sake of Crystal

I was determined to go to the crystal mine, though to be honest I had many questions. Was it a large mine? Was it at a dangerous place? How could an outsider get in? Just to have a look at this crystal mine, I mentally prepared myself for a night in the open alone.

First a two-hour bus journey to the county seat of Tunchang. I first went to an inn to deposit my luggage, and asked the owner about the location of the crystal mine. The information I got was better than I hoped: it would take just over ten minutes to get there. I found an honest-looking woman driver to take me there.

A Dream Come True

We passed by a crystal-processing workshop. I went in to make inquiries and was told by the owner that the crystal mine had long been abandoned because there was no more crystal there. The driver suggested going back, but I insisted on continuing because it was a rare chance to come here. At least I should get to the mine and experience firsthand this mysterious site.

We drove up the mountain in the scorching sun. Not a soul stirred. The road ahead became more and more bumpy. When we took a closer look at it, both of us screamed in surprise. It turned out we were quite near the mine, and the road was covered with crystal, or quartz, to be accurate. It was actually a very common ore in a hexahedral shape, transparent or in bright colours of milky white, yellow, purple, etc. We were driving on a road covered with milky white crystal. How exciting! A dream had come true! The driver caught my excitement. Like two children looking for beautiful shells on a beach, we searched through a pile of crystal ore. When we found a shining, transparent stone, we would shout in delight. Our laughter echoed in the quiet mine site.

Holding a dozen finger-sized crystals, I left most thrilled and fulfilled.

Day 4

Transport: Bus at the Hot Springs Hotel gate along the golden beaches of Bo'ao to the ferry in Chaoyang. (10 yuan, 15 minutes).

Boat to Lecheng Island. (0.5 yuan, 5 minutes).

Bus back to Chaoyang town. (2 yuan, 10 minutes).

Bus to Qionghai (earlier called Jiaji). (3 yuan, 30 minutes).

Accommodation: Qionghai Commercial Building

Address: Opposite the Qionghai Bus Station

Rates : 90 yuan / single room with air-conditioning; 70 yuan / without air-conditioning

Activities: Go sightseeing on Lecheng Island after lunch.

Dining: Breakfast — buffet in the hotel;

Lunch — prepare your own, there are only small stores and no restaurants on Lecheng Island;

Dinner — try a restaurant in the city of Qionghai, where you can taste famous Jiaji Duck.

Clothes: Sun-visors and parasols are a must for the burning sun on Lecheng Island.

! Residents on Lecheng Island are curious about and hospitable to outsiders. Elders are fond of having their picture taken, so bring several rolls of film. Don't forget to mail the photos to them!

CLIMBING WUZHI MOUNTAIN

Could your Master show me, a newcomer here, the way to the forest?"

"Did you hear the gurgling of the creek?"

"Yes." "Then just follow the sound."

~Excerpt from *The Record of Jingde*

Joyful Mountain Climbing

I have long enjoyed do-it-yourself travel. Mountain climbing has become my new interest in recent years and is included in all my itineraries. Yet mountain climbing by oneself is different from sightseeing or leisure travel because it demands more energy, will and sincerity to face and deal with the unexpected. I like to discover another side of myself in searching for solutions to problems.

Setting out from the Holiday Village

Located in Tongshi, Wuzhi (Five Fingers) Mountain is Hainan's largest mountain range. It has the island's biggest nature reserve and virgin tropical forest, with areas of 13,435 and 9,063 hectares respectively. It features a diversified eco-system and is one of the best preserved virgin tropical forests in the world. The mountain has five finger-shaped peaks, giving it its name. The second peak, at 1,867 metres the highest, is the source of the Wanquan River, Hainan's "Mother River".

The elegant holiday village at Wuzhi Mountain is a good place to start climbing the mountain. I suggest spending the first night here so as to enjoy the tranquility, fresh air and delicate fragrance of the forest and to refresh the mind for an early morning climb the next day.

To make a return trip on the narrow, meandering mountain path is supposed to take four or five hours. I arrived at the village at 2 p.m. To save time I began my climb as soon as I checked in. I expected to be back for supper at around 7:30 p.m., before darkness fell.

Experience 1 : Unbearable Weather

1. The women in traditional ethnic costumes are rarely seen in Mount Wuzhi nowadays.
2. The Tongshi Museum illustrates the history of Hainan Island.
3. Mount Wuzhi has the richest varieties of species. Various exotic flowers and grass can be found here.
4. Shuimaocun, the best place for a bird's-eye view of Wuzhi Mountain.
5. Wuzhi Mountain, one of the few well-preserved primitive tropical forests left in the world. (by Chan Yat Nin)



I headed for the mountain, determined to finish the trip in five hours.

A tropical forest immediately filled my eyes. The path was flanked with intricate tree stumps, tall and short. At some points fallen,

withered trunks blocked the path, and I had to climb over them. In the muggy forest, I began sweating after the slightest movement. Soaked through and through, I felt sick from the loss of body fluid and physical strength. I had to think of sweating as a way to remove poisons from my body, which made me feel better.

Experience 2 : Fidgeting

It was very dull walking on the zigzag path. The thick broad-leaved forest and groves on both sides of the path blocked the distant scenery and bright sunshine from view. Enveloped by the forest, I heard no human voices and saw only trash left by tourists. Occasionally, I heard the thunderous chirping of insects. Fidgety and eager to escape, I quickened my pace and didn't rest every 30 minutes as I had before. An hour and half passed, but my surroundings looked unchanged. Completely exhausted, I collapsed upon a stump, meditating while panting for breath.

Don't ignore the real meaning of relax. It's good to adjust both body and soul. Only in a relaxed mood can people comprehend the subtle relationship between themselves and nature.

I closed my eyes, trying to calm down. A cool breeze swept across me while frolicking magpies chirped. I opened my eyes slightly and saw threads of warm sunshine through the beautiful leaves and felt the comfort of the rough stump against my fatigued body. The world seemed different.

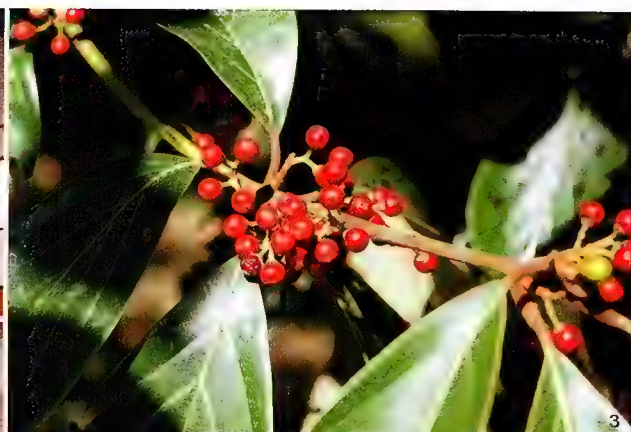
Experience 3 : To Climb the Top or Not

Cherishing a peaceful mind, I continued my journey. After each step, I began to appreciate the shape of the stumps at my feet and the insects on the trunks and listened to the sound of nature. Time flew and two hours passed before I knew it. I should have been close to the top. I finally reached a big rock. Perhaps the top was not far. Beside the rock was a path and a shabby wooden ladder. I had to climb the ladder to get higher.

Great curiosity, a must for mountaineers, spurred me on. To reduce the burden, I left my bag (I met no one else on the way, so didn't worry about losing it) and stumbled up the ladder. I stood up, dirt on my clothes and found the path ahead even more rugged, winding like an "S" so I couldn't see the mountaintop. To go further, one must cling to the mountain, sort of like rock climbing.

I kept on for ten minutes, but my destination was not to be seen. It started getting dark (the forest was already dark enough) and I needed a good two hours to get back. I was forced to return.

For the first time in my mountain climbing adventures I had to give



up. Because of my previous lingering on the mountain, I had to rush downhill without stopping. I was back down in two hours, with time enough for supper before sunset. The guests in the restaurant seemed quite taken aback by me, a completely soaked and exhausted woman.

This experience shows me that in addition to tempering the will, one must be adaptable. We are always moved by the stories of those who risk their lives mountain climbing, while ignoring the principle that one should always evaluate his or her strength before acting.

Day 5

Transport: Bus to Tunchang County from the Qionghai Bus Station. (11.5 yuan, 2 hours). Hire a motor for the crystal mine from Tunchang Bus Station. (Return trip 10 yuan, 15 minutes) If you need the bus to wait for you, the fare needs further negotiation.

Bus to Wuzhishan City, also called Tongshi, from the Qionghai Bus Station (21 yuan, 2.5 hours). Find public bus leaving for the slope of Wuzhi Mountain (a place called Shuimanxiang.) Last bus 4p.m. (10 yuan, 1.5 hours) Then take a motor (6 yuan, 15 minutes) to the mountain area (initial charge for entering the mountain 10 yuan) and the hotel.

Accommodation: Tongshi Wuzhishan International Holiday Village

Address: Halfway up the mountain Tel: (898) 8655 0001

Price: Around 380 yuan for an air-conditioned wooden house with shower. Discounts are offered during the slack season.

Activities: Pick up crystals at Tunchang crystal mine, visit Hainan Provincial Ethnography Museum in Wuzhishan City before noon, bus to Shuimanxiang before 4 p.m., arrive at the holiday village before dusk.

Dining: Field rations prepared by you, since time is very limited for breakfast and lunch. For supper, you can savour the cooked-out barbecue or hot pot.

Clothes: Long-sleeved cotton blouse and cap are needed against the scorching sun at the crystal mine and in case of heatstroke. Wind-and-rain resistant, permeable clothes should be available for the evening because of the low temperature on the mountain.

! Pay attention to personal safety, the crystal mine is isolated. Take a female driver with you to the mine. A flashlight is useful in the evening due insufficient electricity supply on the mountain.



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SANYA — A WATERFRONT PARADISE FOR EVER

It happened to be China's Labour Day Holiday when I arrived in Sanya. The seven-day holiday meant tourists from around the world gathered on Hainan Island. Sanya has many beautiful sea beaches and islands such as Great East Sea, Yalong Bay, Sanya Bay, West Island and Wuzhizhou Island. Tourists didn't pack the place, but only added to the holiday atmosphere.

THREE FEELINGS OF THE SEA

DADONGHAI, WEST ISLAND, SANYA BAY



Previous page: Great East Sea at the Labour Day holiday.

1. Parachuting on the sea (280 yuan), one of the most interesting activities at Great East Sea.
2. West Island, a diver's paradise, with visibility underwater eight to 18 metres.
3. Diving coach on the West Island instructing tourists on "Space Diving".
4. Sanya Bay brings leisure and peace.



Tourists usually choose to live in the nicer, though more remote, holiday resorts and stay indoors. In order to better get the feel of Sanya, though, Great East Sea (Dadonghai) is a good place to go. Together with the newly developed Xidao and Wuzhizhou islands, Dadonghai has many water-related activities. Enjoying the sunset at Sanya will make your tour more colourful.

Land of Joy — Great East Sea

Sanya, China's southernmost city, is dubbed China's best coastal holiday spot. It has soft, white sand, crystal-clear water, and fresh air. In a 1999 survey of air quality conducted by the United Nations in 158 cities in the world only Cuba's capital Havana scored better than Sanya.

Staying near Dadonghai in Sanya is very convenient. It has long beaches and a well-developed transport system. It takes only a 10-minute bus ride to get downtown. The hotels here are even closer to the beach. You can enjoy various activities from morning to evening, including diving, an underwater submarine tour, sand motorcycling, hydro-motorcycling, a banana-boat, dugout canoeing, parachuting, beach volleyball, swimming, walking on the beach and sunbathing. When you get tired, rest in your hotel room. When hungry, dine down by the sea. Dadonghai is a public place where everyone can enjoy the blessings of nature. At dusk, the beach becomes crowded and filled with laughter and sound of waves. Just to sit and watch the tourists is delightful.

West Island — Star of Tomorrow

Xidao, or West Island, also known as Xidaimao Island, is eight kilometres west of Sanya and in the state coral reef nature reserve. Developed two years ago by a Taiwan businessman, it attracts streams of visitors with its excellent sand beach and beautiful undersea scenery. Those who take the underwater tour will marvel at the soft coral reef, lobster and other marine animals. West Island is included in the Sanya tour itinerary by travel agencies. Except for accommodation, it has the same entertainment facilities and prices as Dadonghai. Among its recreational activities, "Space Diving" is the

most popular, where visitors walk under water wearing a pilot's helmet and underwater breathing equipment.

The updated "West Island Tourism Plan" has passed its initial appraisal, and the island will be developed into the best tropical scenic area in Hainan by exploiting the geological and resource advantages and establishing a proper environmental system to preserve the unspoiled ecology and clear seawater.

Sanya Bay at Dusk

I found Sanya Bay by accident. While in a cab driving west from Dadonghai to the Xidao wharf, I came across a surprisingly long stretch of beach, with palm trees standing on both sides of the path and several bikes dotting the roadside. The beach was deserted except for local residents. Sanya Bay, to the west of the beach is a good place for sunsets. As dusk approached, more people arrived. Several families sat on the lawn, the elderly stayed under the trees and young people jogged on the road. Each person did his or her own thing.

I found a place on the beach and lay down on a large towel. The gentle sea breeze comforted my scorched skin like an angel's hands. Children's laughter and voices wafted in the breeze, clear and melodious like the sound of Aeolian bells. Accompanied by the sound of waves, I fell asleep. An hour later, I was awakened by the bright sunset glow and saw the sun falling into the ocean.

Day 6

Transport: Hire a motor vehicle bound for Shuimanxiang Mountain-Viewing Stand (entrance: 10 yuan), which provides a panoramic view of the front aspect of Wuzhi Mountain. (16 yuan return, less than 1 hour including sightseeing.) To go to Sanya, one must take a bus at the Shuimanxiang Bus Station to go back to Wuzhishan City (fare and trip time are the same as above). Many public buses at Wuzhishan Bus Station head for Sanya, (14 yuan, 2 hours and 50 minutes). Alight at Dadonghai. You can rent a car to visit Sanya for around 100 yuan per day, much cheaper than taking a cab. If you want to visit several scenic spots within one day, have your hotel help you find a car.

Accommodation: Red Coral International Youth Hostel in Sanya
Address: Xinhua News Agency Villa Quarter, Luling Road, Dadonghai, Sanya Tel: (898) 8821 3665
Price: 150 yuan (Double room, public rest rooms); or
Sanya Shan Hai Tian Hotel (separate multi-story villas)
Address: Luling Road, Dadonghai, Sanya
Tel: (898) 8821 1688
Price: About 150 yuan for a double room with bathroom (there is special bus service to pick you up for the hotel, and hotel facilities are open).

Activities: Climb the Wuzhi Mountain in the morning (100 yuan for a tour guide);

enjoy the panoramic view of the mountain at Shuimanxiang at noon; play at Dadonghai in the evening

Dining: Field rations prepared by you, since time is very limited for breakfast and lunch. In the evening, supper in the hotel or eat seafood on the seaside.

Clothes: Swimsuit, summer clothes and sandals are needed. Essential sun block or umbrella.

! : The beach chairs along Dadonghai are charged for use since they belong to the hotel.

Day 7

Transport: Ride a motor vehicle (starting at two yuan) or walk from the hotel to the statue at Dadonghai. Then No. 2 or 4 public bus to Sanya city proper (1 yuan, 20 minutes). On the way one can transfer to the special mini-bus to Tianya Haijiao (the Remotest Cape of the Earth), (4 yuan, 30 minutes). The Xidao wharf is near the Pearl Wharf near Tianya Haijiao. To return, take the same mini-bus to Sanya city proper and then a cab to Sanya Bay.

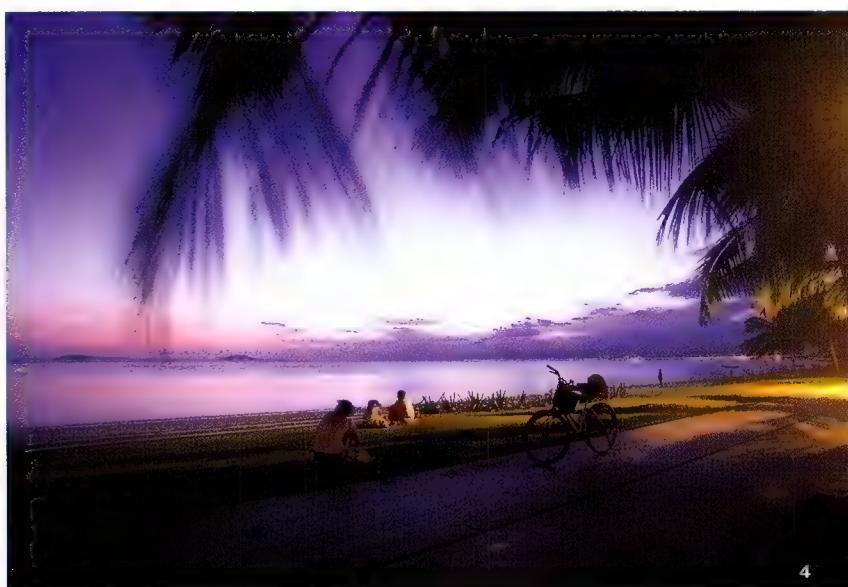
Accommodation: Same as above.

Activities: Visit West Island and if time allows Luhuitou (Deer Turning Back). At dusk, sunset at Sanya Bay. If you have one day more here, there is another diving scenic spot, Wuzhizhou Island. For detailed information there, please refer to the report in No. 264 issue of our magazine.

Dining: Breakfast in the hotel. At noon, lunch on special seafood on West Island. Later try more seafood for supper at the open-air stores.

Shopping: You can buy some delicacies and special local food at the duty-free shops at the airport. The market near Tianya Haijiao has the richest collection of shell works. You must find reliable stores, like Jingrun Pearl and Crystal Cultural Hall for precious pearls or crystal articles.

! : Take precautions against heatstroke on the yacht journey to West Island, as the boat is open-air in the blazing sun.



VISIT SANYA AGAIN

Tianya Haijiao (Remotest Cape of the Earth) and Luhuitou (Deer Turning Back) are the most competitive scenic spots in Sanya. The city has also Nanshan Buddhism Cultural Centre and Daxiao Dongtian (Large and Small Caverns).

To Tianya Haijiao or Not

I received an e-mail from a friend when I was in Sanya, asking me where I was. "I am at the end of the sky and the corner of the sea," I replied, hinting to him I was at Tianya Haijiao.

Tianya Haijiao is a beautiful name, which sets free a visitor's imagination. Actually, it is two rocks with characters of "Tianya" (天涯) and "Haijiao" (海角) on them, often used as a photo backdrop. It seems disappointing that one pays 40 yuan just to visit a few rocks.

Yet I am willing to do that; for me it is important to feel the atmosphere here. Tianya Haijiao has a plaintive touch because in ancient times it was a place of exile for poets and disgraced officials. Without the crowd, one would feel lost in wild and fanciful thoughts, facing the endless sea.

The Nanshan Cultural Tourist Zone

Nanshan (South Mountain) Cultural Tourism Zone, a famous attraction on Hainan Island, is 40 km west of Sanya City and covers an area of 57 sq km. It contains the Nanshan Buddhist Cultural Centre and Daxiao Dongtian (the Large and Small Caverns). It was the first location in China to adopt the ISO14001 environmental management system and the first to be authenticated by the country. Last year, it was named one of the first of AAAA scenic spots by the National Tourism Administration. A 108-metre-high statue of the Goddess of Mercy, Guanyin, is under construction, and will be the first of its kind to be erected in the sea. In the scenic area there is a wooden-house hotel, the only one on Hainan Island. Local people have the longest lifespan in China, with an average of 74.7 years. Hence the saying: "May your life last long like the South Mountain".

The Nanshan Buddhist Cultural Centre

The tourist's patience was tested by the special-line public bus from the city proper to the Nanshan Buddhist Cultural Centre. The driver kept telling the passengers that the bus was leaving while busily soliciting more customers. Twenty minutes passed and the bus still didn't move. I couldn't help complaining. "There is no use being impatient. No bus will take only one passenger to cover a 40-km journey. Otherwise we will lose money," yelled the ticket seller in response. This specious reply kept me quiet for ten minutes more before I gave up and left the bus.

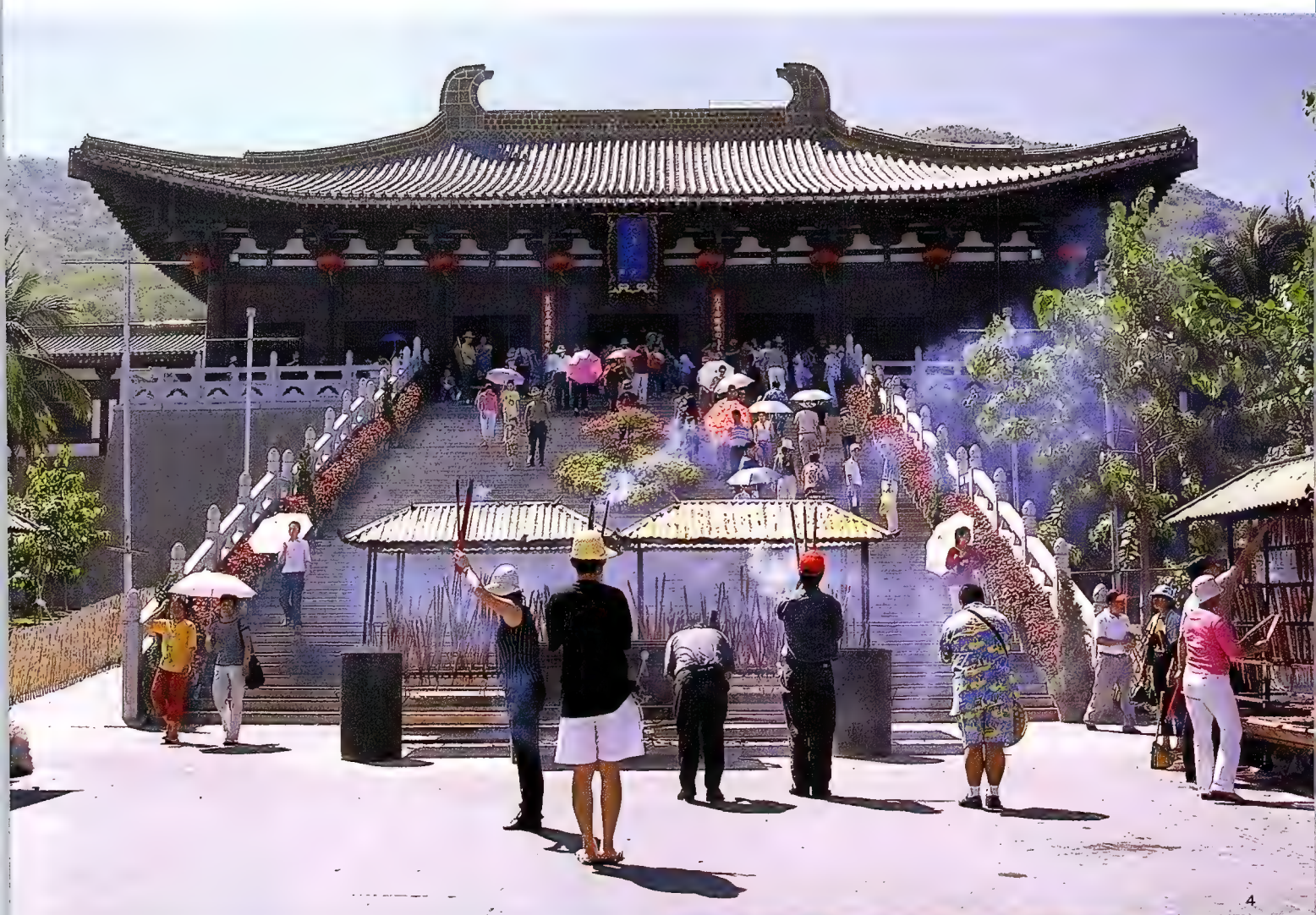
At the cultural centre, I was impressed by its modern management. Everything, from the food stores at the door to the



souvenir shops or ticket counters, is in good order, rarely seen in the Labour Day holiday with so many crowds.

Through the entrance I saw a colossal statue of the Goddess of Mercy, with tourists busily taking photos. Due to high temperatures and the huge area of the centre, I suggest you buy a ticket for one of the electric buses, it makes for easier sightseeing. On the way one can see stone engravings, Longevity Valley and Nanshan Villa. You can stop at whatever interests you. Near the sightseeing mobile station is the Chanyueyuan Food Plaza. Across from the market is the Yuanqi Tower; the vegetarian food is simply wonderful. After getting off the bus, you will find Nanshan Temple, in the architectural style of the Tang Dynasty. Research shows that this place is the only one for Buddhist rites constructed with state approval in the last five decades.

If you have less interest in Buddhism, then appreciate the beautiful scenery. Besides gazing at the meticulously trimmed flowers, you will be intoxicated by the azure sky, surfing waves, and



the natural rock beach where the statue of the Goddess of Mercy is being constructed.

The Large and Small Caverns

Different from the Nanshan Buddhist Cultural Centre, the scenic area of Daxiao Dongtian (the Large and Small Caverns) is completely natural. Lingering there, I felt lucky I had not missed it.

There are far fewer tourists here, even during holidays. "These caverns, called the Wonder of the Sea and Mountains, are thought to be the living place of celestial beings. In addition to the natural scenery of sea, mountains, rocks and trees, it has many rock inscriptions left by ancient people. Since ancient times it has been called the number one landscape in Hainan." said a young guard at the entrance.

Seeing is believing. The trees, grass, mountains, rivers, and air refresh my mind. Although it is one of the southernmost areas, the sunny days still feel great. Each man-made section here is well

1. Local people in Nanshan live a longer life. It's said over 800 citizens there are 95 years old or more.
2. The inscription of *Tianya* made by Cheng Zhe during the reign of Emperor Yangzheng of the Qing Dynasty.
3. During the temple fair of Nanshan in the fourth and sixth lunar months each year, the Nanshan Buddhist Cultural Centre also has many special activities.
4. Nanshan Temple is in the style of Tang Dynasty's architecture.

designed, including swings at the seaside and hammocks under the coconut trees.


Along the way is a magnificent rock beach, said to be the place where Jianzhen, an eminent monk during the Tang Dynasty, came ashore after a typhoon during his fifth sea voyage to Japan. Up the steps are ancient rock inscriptions reading "Angling Stand", "Wonder of the Sea and Mountains" and "Sword-testing Peak". Ahead are Xiao Dongtian (the Small Caverns) where people can enjoy their coolness. When you walk up the left steps, after you catch your breath you can see the oldest tree in the world, the Dragon's Blood Tree (*Dracaena*

VISIT SANYA AGAIN



cochinchinensis). I can hardly believe this tree, with its hollow, decayed empty trunk, has lived for thousands of years. Then, my doubt seemed solved when seeing four Chinese characters inscribed on a nearby stone. The four words, “不材之木” which mean “useless wood”, came from a legend created by the ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuang Zi:

As Zhuang Zi walked in the mountain, he saw a tall tree with luxuriant foliage. The woodcutters stopped by the tree but didn't cut it. When asked why, he said it was useless. “Not being a useful piece of timber allowed it to survive all these years,” sighed Zhuang Zi.

The Xiaoyue (Lesser Moon) Bay towards the end of the scenic area is undeveloped and pollution free. I sat there for a long time. 

Translated by Jin Jianzhong



1. The Large and Small Caverns own coconut palms, blue ripples and azure sky.
2. The Dragon's Blood Tree is the oldest tree in the world.
3. The Jingrun International Crystal Cultural Centre, an exhibition hall and crystal shop.

Day 8

Transport: To Nanshan Cultural Centre: Take motor vehicle (starting at two yuan) or walk from the hotel to the crossing by the statue at Dadonghai. Then No. 2 or 4 public bus and get off at the Sanya East Stop. Transfer to the special mini-bus to Nanshan Cultural Centre (Fare: 8 yuan; Time: 40 minutes). A ten-minute bus ride from the centre brings you to Daxiao Dongtian.

Accommodation: Red Coral International Youth Hostel in Sanya.

Address: Xinhua News Agency Villa Quarter, Luling Road, Dadonghai, Sanya.

Activities: Nanshan Cultural Centre in the morning (50 yuan), Lagre and Small Caverns at noon (28 yuan), stop by the Tianya Haijiao in the afternoon (46 yuan) for special local products.

Dining: Breakfast in the hotel, lunch at the Nanshan Cultural Centre vegetarian buffet, back to Sanya city proper for supper.

Shopping: You can buy some delicacies and special local food at the duty-free shops at the airport.

Clothes: Same as above.

! : Get on the special-line bus to Nanshan Cultural Centre with more passengers since the bus will not leave until it gets enough customers.

Day 9

Transport: Cab from the hotel to the airport (Fare: 50 yuan; Time: 30 minutes). On the way stop at the Jingrun Crystal Cultural Centre (Tel: 898-8834 1167) near the airport entrance.

Activities: Shop in the morning for local specialties; after lunch take a cab to the airport.

Dining: Have breakfast in the hotel and a simple lunch at the airport.

Shopping: The duty-free shop is the ideal shopping place.

! : Credit card won't work at the airport, so keep some cash on you. The cab drivers may urge you to shop at the store for special local products. It does have a better selection, but is more expensive.

Thanks to ★ China Travel Service (Hong Kong) Limited
Tel: (852) 2851 1700

Crystal Cultural Hall

Before leaving Sanya, stop by the Crystal Cultural Hall for a visit or to buy some crystals of reliable quality. The hall near the airport, Yanglan Town, Sanya City, is not just any common jewellery store. Don't be scared by the luxurious appearance of the hall or the crowd of tour buses outside. You can look at the exhibited crystals and learn their history and composition. You will be amazed by the important position they have held in history. Crystals have close links with art, religions, optics, medical sciences, chemistry, geology and archaeology.

In the 4,472-square-metre hall, visitors can get general information about crystals, appreciate supreme crystal products and watch how they are made. Or you can admire the exquisitely carved artistic works of crystal. The salesman told us these were not for sale but for exhibition. If you want to buy, consult the experts on the spot to learn how to tell real crystals from fakes.

Crystal products are new in China, yet already fake and inferior crystals flood the market, causing great loss to consumers and leading people to believe that real crystals are too expensive. The price tag for the fake products is just another way of cheating, too.

Differences Between Glass and Crystal:

Crystal has a better heat conductivity than glass, so it is cooler to the touch;

The hardness number for natural crystal is seven and that for glass is five. Therefore crystal can cut the surface of glass.

Differences Between Natural and Artificial Crystals:

Natural crystal feels cool; artificial crystal feels warmer;

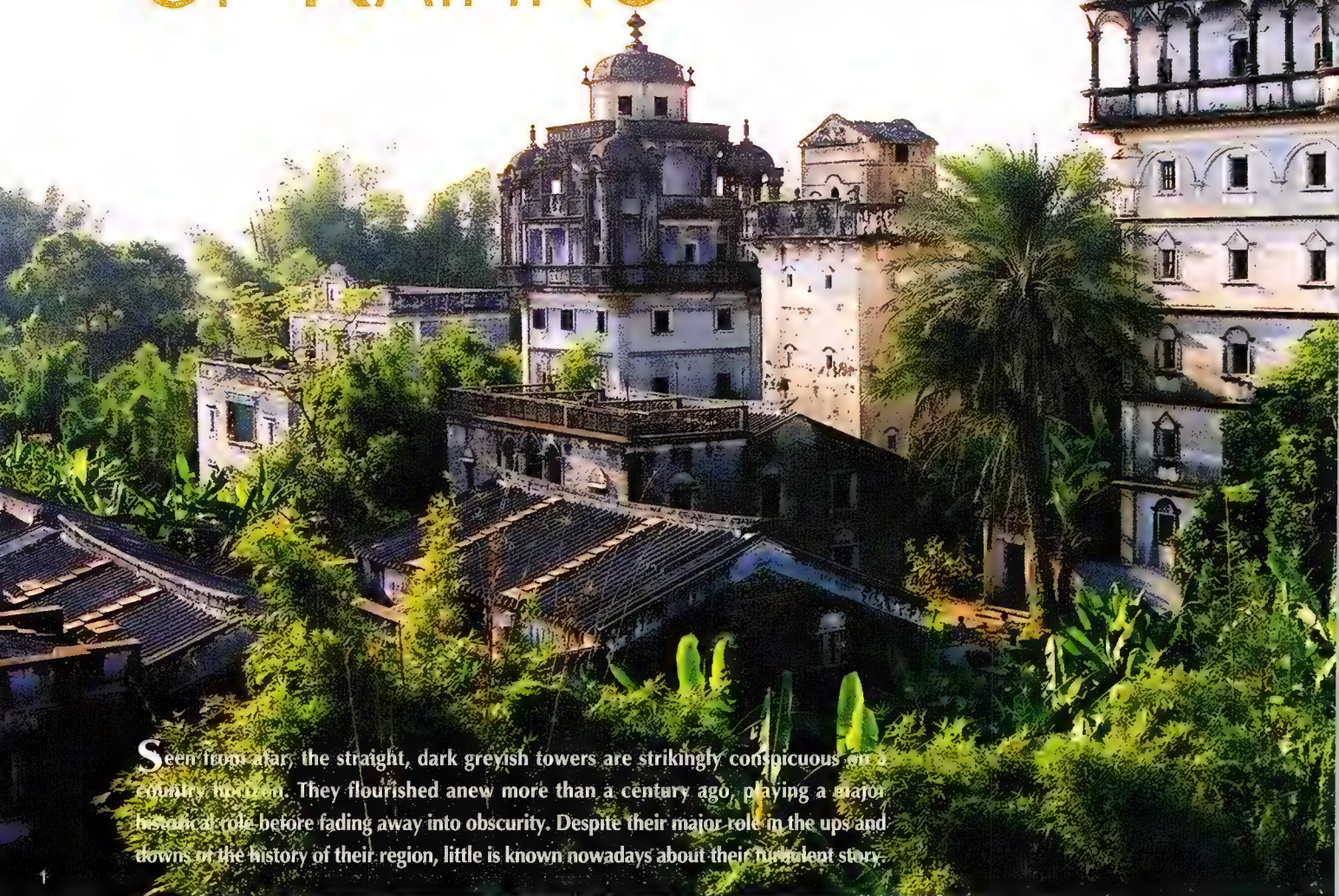
Natural crystal features deep and light colors; artificial crystal has an even colour and high saturation level.

Natural crystal contains natural mineral inclusion; artificial crystal has irregular solid inclusion.



UNYIELDING HOMESTEADS — THE WATCHTOWERS OF KAIPING

Photos & article by Sheng Changfeng



Seen from afar, the straight, dark greyish towers are strikingly conspicuous in a country horizon. They flourished anew more than a century ago, playing a major historical role before fading away into obscurity. Despite their major role in the ups and downs of the history of their region, little is known nowadays about their turbulent story.



NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS CAME IN PAIRS

The Tanjiang River meanders from the northwest through the hilly land of Kaiping in Guangdong Province. Villages there are mostly set against the hills, with clear streams winding through lush groves of wild bamboo — a typical quiet and natural country scene. In 1649, the 6th year in the Shunzhi reign, Kaiping was set up as a county, but the peaceful life people expected didn't

eventuate. After successive years of typhoon storms, impoverished men were reduced to banditry — a desperate means of survival. Some of them went out to rob at night, looting around the area and causing many tragedies.

As a result, the earliest watchtowers appeared — Fengfulou (Supporting Father Watchtower) and Yinglonglou (Welcoming Dragon Watchtower). It is a pity that Fengfulou has not been preserved to this day. Yinglonglou was built in 1650 by the Guan



family in Sanmenli in Chikan Town to guard against bandits. Thanks to the protection of the villagers who cherished it so much, the tower is still intact today. In addition to defense, Yinglonglou also helped the villagers to survive several severe floods.

When the 19th century arrived, the tenacious and patient Kaiping people became restless. In 1839 Xie Shede and other peasants of various ages from Tangkou Village went to Hong Kong as coolies. They

moved on to Old Golden Mountain (today's San Francisco) to do donkeywork. After a few years some of the luckier ones came back with a bit of money. Kaiping people began to call them admiringly "Golden Mountain Uncles" and "Travellers of the Stars and the Stripes". According to records, there were 140,000 Chinese in America between 1925 and 1938, most of them from Kaiping and Taishan in Guangdong Province.

The simple old idea of returning home after making their fortune brought these "Golden Mountain Uncles" back to China anxiously carrying their hard earned "Golden Mountain Boxes". They bought land and built houses, trying hard to provide a better life for their families. Yet social order in Kaiping worsened when envious local bandits began to prey on those newly returned from abroad with new found wealth. It is recorded that from 1912 to 1930 there were more than 80 major robbery cases in Kaiping. Over 100 people were killed, almost 1,000 kidnapped and much property looted. The bandits also captured the county seat three times, taking county governor Zhu Jianzhang as a hostage.

Under these circumstances, the early Qing Dynasty watchtowers like Fengfulou and Yinglonglou caught the attention of the recently returned overseas Chinese and more were built, financed by the returnees. So a large number of watchtowers appeared at the start of both the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China. It is said that there used to be more than 5,000 watchtowers in Kaiping, but nowadays only 1833 still stand.

FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL IN TROUBLED TIMES

In turbulent years every sturdily walled watchtower performed its duty of maintaining its owner's safety. One day in December, 1923, over 100 bandits disguised themselves and came into Chikanxu, taking County Middle School principal Hu Jun and more than 20 teachers and students as hostages to get money from their families. As they passed Hongyilou watchtower in Chikanying Village, manned day and night, the sentry spotted



them. Finally, the brave villagers captured more than 10 bandits.

The action aroused the whole county. Many existing watchtowers were better equipped, some even with guns. In villages where there had been no watchtowers, villagers began to build one either by collected funds or by donations from those returning from abroad. At that time, every village had a tower.

1. Ruishilou, in Jinjianfli Village, Yangyang town, standing 40 metres high and covering 92 square metres, is the largest and most striking watchtower in Kaiping.
2. Two lifelike unicorn reliefs on a lintel of a watchtower in Jiangya Village.
3. This watchtower, though "Western" and not having a main door, was still decorated with Chinese style relief.
4. An old letter and a photo from Los Angeles vividly reveal the lives of the overseas Chinese in those years.

A Record of Kaiping: Located in the southwest of the Pearl River Delta, the City of Kaiping has an area of 1,659 square kilometres, with a population of 650,000 and 700,000 returned overseas Chinese and compatriots from Hong Kong and Macao. Kaiping is over 100 kilometres from Guangzhou and is connected by an expressway and the No. 325 state highway. Kaiping's beautiful landscape is complemented by abundant local products and convenient transport. Sanfu Town is the economic and cultural centre of Kaiping, surrounded by 18 counties under the city's administration.



These watchtowers tenaciously resisted the intrusion of local bandits and the Japanese invaders. Every village in Kaiping can boast legendary stories. In Zhuliantang Village in Dasha Town, I chanced upon two such watchtowers, named Zhuchenglou, begun in 1918 using Hongmao cement (a mixture of cement and other materials) and large mountain rocks. The villagers told me people in Zhuliantang were very hard up and communications were poor. Despite this, bandits often looted the harvests. To combat these robberies, the villagers built the watchtowers with cement given by folks returned from the West and rocks from the nearby mountains. In June, 1930 when over 200 bandits from neighbouring Yangchun County arrived at Zhuliantang Village and began to loot as usual, the villagers quickly got onto Zhuchenglou and fought back with the flintlocks given by those returned from abroad, killing and wounding 12 bandits. The rest fled empty handed.

The seven-storey, 19-metre Nanlou is located in Tengjiao Village in Chikan, Kaiping by the side of the Tanjiang River at a

communication junction on both land and water between Sanfu and Chikan. The Situ clan built it to guard against robbery. On 16 July, 1945, the Japanese army wanted to retreat down the southern main road and marched on Chikan Town from three directions. The Kuomintang army fled at the news. Mr Situ organised the militia and fought the Japanese from the high watchtower. But owing to the big difference in strength, the militia suffered heavy casualties, leaving only

Situ Xuan, Situ Chang and five others to guard the watchtower. They fought for seven days, inflicting serious losses on the Japanese army. Frustrated, the furious Japanese bombarded the tower with heavy cannons and mortars. Yet the walls of Nanlou were so thick and sturdy that even the mortars didn't penetrate.

GREAT VARIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL FORMS

Compared with traditional houses, life in the tightly closed-in, oppressive and

shadowy watchtowers was not comfortable. But the owners had no other choice. So the watchtower was a kind of cage-like fairyland confining the inhabitants to its limited space. Such strange dwellings ceased to be built right after 1949 with the country liberated and local bandits successfully eliminated. Gradually people moved out of the watchtowers.

The watchtowers were built in a variety of architectural styles. The early ones, as represented by Yinglonglou (still extant today), completely follow



the design of brick built Qing Dynasty houses, except the walls are thicker and doors and windows narrower and smaller. Then with the participation of the returned overseas Chinese, watchtowers began to adopt some European designs. In the early years of the Republic of China, the number of watchtowers increased sharply. While still very sturdy, the watchtowers reached a pinnacle in a marvelous combination of traditional Chinese watchtowers and classical European architecture.

For the purpose of protection, all the watchtowers had narrow iron gates and windows. On the top there might be a flat roof in the form of a bird's nest or colonnade, or a dome, with ports for defensive firing and observation. The spaces and sight lines for defence were very scientifically designed. There are scarcely any identical watchtowers among the 1,833 available today, with the upper parts in a great variety of complicated forms.

The top parts of the watchtowers differ greatly, ranging from the typical traditional Chinese gabled roof, European castles of the Middle Ages, or ancient Roman style. There is generally a horizontal tablet inscribed with the name of the tower or some stirring poetic words.

WHO WAS THE FIRST TO BUILD WATCHTOWERS?

Who was the first person returning from abroad to have come up with such whimsical

watchtowers? This enigma has become harder to solve with the passage of time. Yet there are some clues as to how the watchtowers were built without any blueprint. According to some villagers, none of the "Golden Mountain Uncles" who went



abroad in the early days were educated and couldn't have brought back any plans. They could only draw, and bring home, sketches of Western style buildings based on their impressions. Others said they had once seen coloured pictures, called postcards by the "Golden Mountain Uncles", printed with Western architecture and scenery from around the world.

In the early days of the last century, most watchtower builders accepted Western technology of reinforced concrete and brought cement with them back home. Except for a few watchtowers made from brick and stone, most were built with cement



mixed with other materials, because cement was rather expensive and hard to transport. Some watchtowers were constructed using a kind of three-in-one slurry—a mixture of mud, lime and red sugar conceived and tested by tower builders when there was no way to get cement. The slurry was poured into the space between plates of plywood, pounded firm and pressed level. When dry it was very tough and weather resistant. It is not hard to imagine how difficult it must have been to build such high, sturdy and striking watchtowers without the help of any machines but with only hands and simple tools.

There are 1,833 watchtowers in Kaiping area, distributed over 18 towns. This year, China's State Administration of Cultural Relics said it would apply in 2003 for the Kaiping watchtowers to be included in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List. Many experts believe there is still a long way to go, because to date there has not been enough substantial research on the origin and development of the watchtowers. Before it is too late let's give them more attention so that their painful history will not be lost in the flood of time. 

Translated by L. Yu



1. A watchtower built by the mixture of lime in Yangang, as old as history and elegant.
2. The only two watchtowers with exactly the same structure are in Huaguili Village, Chikan Town in Kaiping.
3. On a rainy evening, a rural woman quickly passes a watchtower after work.
4. Built in 1650, the Welcoming Dragon Watchtower is the oldest one of its type in Kaiping.
5. The Shouzhong Watchtower, built by the local villagers in 1903, in Chunyi Village, Yangang Town. Due to its unstable foundations, the building is leaning a further two centimetres to the southeast per year.

DISCOVERIES



Into the Badain Jaran Desert

by Huang Yaohong

Covering an area of over 40,000 square kilometres and with sand hills rising more than 500 metres, Badain Jaran is the highest desert in the world.

In my imagination, Badain Jaran had always been a forbidding, desolate expanse of sand dunes and sweeping sandstorms, the only human beings passers-by or adventurers.

In Alxa, I was surprised to learn from locals that the desert was inlaid with nearly a hundred lakes and ponds, along with human settlements and temples, and camels and flocks of sheep. Everything sounded so attractive. I just had to go there.





Surfing in the Sand

With the help of the local tourism bureau, I planned to drive to the heart of the desert.

A year ago, a "gold-digging" craze swept through the desert after fairy shrimps (*Chirocephalus*) were discovered in the lakes. A kilogramme of dried fairy shrimp eggs was worth 540 yuan. Disastrously, thousands of people swarmed into the desert. At its peak, one small lake was surrounded by 300 people. They scooped desperately and many made fortunes. Lucky ones harvested 25 to 30 kilogrammes a day. To ship the product out, the "gold-diggers", eager for quick money, could not bear the slowness of the camels and risked driving a vehicle. We also decided to risk driving.

Buhe, the warm-hearted director of the tourism bureau, came with me. Bagna, our driver, had previously driven into the heart of the desert, but this was his first visit to Sumin Jaran, my destination.

At the western end of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the place was economically backward and road conditions were not hard to imagine. After an hour's rough ride it suddenly became smooth. We

were now in the desert and driving on the soft sand seemed like a boat sailing on the sea.

However when we dashed up and down hills, I found the trip very scary. Though not a coward, I gripped the back of the Mr Buhe's seat in front of me. My palms filled with cold sweat. At one stage, we had to drive along the slope of a huge sand dune. Down below was a deep sand valley. Bagna followed tracks left by other vehicles and, eyes fixed on the way ahead, charged the jeep onto the slope at high speed. Everything in the vehicle tilted to the right and I clearly felt the wheels slide. Director Buhe told me later many vehicles had overturned trying to pass through there.

Desert Settlers' Inherent Sense of Direction

Crossing through a huge "sand bowl", Buhe said: "Last time when we were going to Zhunjigede, we entered a 'sand bowl' by mistake. We tried for a long time but could not get out of it. When night fell we had to sleep in the 'bowl'. We finally got out the next day after many attempts."

More sand bowls appeared and several times we landed in one. Luckily several days previously there had been rain and the dampness helped us to get out of danger.

The deeper we got into the desert, the harder it became to get one's bearings. Bagna nervously examined every sand hill, trying to find our way with almost nothing but instinct. There was neither a living soul nor a vehicle to be seen, only occasional tracks. Buhe said people living in the desert possessed a natural sense of direction. They did not need to look at the sun, but could tell the direction by simply looking at the contour and combination of sand hills and by examining camel droppings.

The first lake we came to was Tamyin whose calm surface impressed me. Then Zhailaitu with its island in the middle. I wanted to stop to take a few pictures, but as we were in a hurry and the road conditions were bad, we had to press on. Later, at Alatetu, we saw





several people drying shrimp eggs by the lake. We asked for directions. I looked carefully at the expensive shrimp eggs and found them no different from sand grains, only darker in colour.

Moving Sunset Scenery

After lunch, we tried several different directions before coming to a lake called Hudog Jaran. Buhe felt that the direction was still not right and asked for help from several farmers drying licorice root. We were heading in the wrong direction and hurriedly turned back. If we could not reach our destination before dark we would have to spend the night in the desert.

After that it was plain sailing. As we dashed down the longest and steepest sand slope, the sun was quickly setting. Suddenly my attention was captured by a solitary temple standing in the haziness of the sunset. The temple had totally merged with the desert expanses, either because the sunset was particularly moving or because of hundreds of years of weathering sandstorms. I was deeply captivated by it at first sight.

This was the Badain Jaran Temple and the lake behind it the Sumin Jaran. Since it was surrounded by high sand dunes, few people ever came by vehicle. This is the core of the Badain Jaran Desert and the

most dynamic lake where four families had homes.

We pulled up in front of a row of brick houses owned by Samteng, the manager of the temple and for years the only resident at the holy ground. For the next few days, we would live in his house.

The temple was built in 1755 and, 250 years later, still retained its original appearance.

"Every single piece of brick, stone, tile and wood is original, brought over by camels from hundreds of kilometres away." Samteng's eyes filled with pride. A Tibetan Buddhist temple in the heart of a rolling desert — this is unique.

A Temple Loses its Spiritual Soul

After supper, we continued to listen to the story about the temple.

Samteng said: "I came here to become a monk when I was very young. At the time, more than sixty lamas lived here. Then the Cultural Revolution began and we all lost our jobs." The Red Guards came into

Previous page: A new desert is forming at the edge of the Gobi.

Small picture: We are in an extremely precarious situation.

1. The Buddha statues in the Badain Jaran Temple.

2. Mr. Samteng lives a simple life and used all his money to maintain the temple.

3. Mr. Samteng holding a religious ritual with his younger son.





the desert heartland on camels in their drive against all things traditional. They sought to destroy Buddha statues, scriptures and all religious objects. The temple itself escaped destruction, its sheer size and solid structure making it an ideal warehouse. Thereafter, the temple lost its spiritual soul and its sacredness. Camels carrying grain and fodder went in and out of this former holy site.

I asked him: "When you were no longer a lama, what did you do for a living?"

He said: "I went back to tending animals. After all I was a herdsman to begin with. Later I studied at the Medical College of Inner Mongolia. Upon graduation, I got a job at Menggen Town. A doctor was needed to work in the Badain Jaran Desert. Nobody wanted to go and so I volunteered. Soon I got approval and a double raise in my salary, as an encouragement for working in a place of hardship."

"Then when did you enter the temple again?"

"In 1987. Actually for years I worked near the temple. Finding it falling into poor condition, my heart ached. After all it was a heritage from the Qing Dynasty."

His brother, Aribuji, visiting from Beijing, supplied the missing parts of the story.

Aribuji, who had great respect for his elder brother, told me that after his brother retired from his job as a doctor, taking care of the temple took over his life. Apart from paying for his family's necessities, he used all his pension and money from raising animals for maintaining the temple. In the past few years, he had spent more than 50,000 yuan on the temple, digging a ditch to divert water, building a stone wall, repairing the scripture hall and repainting the Buddha statues.

A Family Photo of All Residents at Sumin Jaran

In the morning, I went to the temple. Samteng was going to hold a religious ritual as another renovation of the temple had just been

completed. I saw Buhe going around the temple. He said it was a prayer for good luck and so I went around the temple three times too.

To understand such a simple temple requires piety and wisdom. Visitors to temples filled with fancy carved woodwork and richly painted interiors can easily become oblivious. The basic simplicity of the temple in front of me, in contrast, was even more moving. In the chaotic years, many large temples were destroyed, but this one survived. Later, people began to rebuild and expand their temples though this one's continued survival depended

on the efforts of a single old man.

I hope some day before it totally disappears authorities will lend a helping hand and realize



that, at this 250-year-old temple deep in the world's highest desert in western Inner Mongolia, the civilization and history of different regions are mingled.

Like the temple, the desert ecology also faces increasing challenges. Drought made survival difficult for sheep and the population was dwindling. At another lake, I saw an old man who had migrated from Gansu when young. After 40 years his family was the only one of the original 14 still in the area. And he was preparing to return to his hometown.

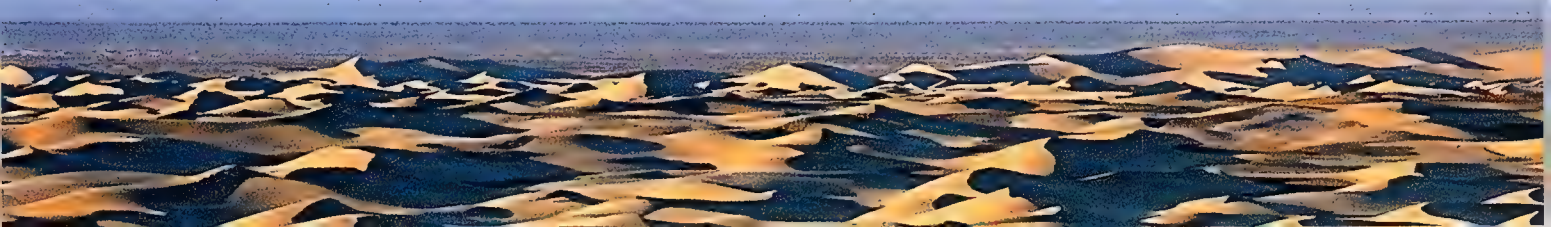
I was struck by an idea: to invite all the population — every one of the four households — living in Sumin Jaran for a group photo in front of the temple.

A First-class Actor Out of the Desert

Compared with his brother Samteng, Aribuji was much more robustly built. Also retired, he still looked strong and energetic with a soldierly manner. Before retiring, he was a singer with the title of first-class actor with the Cultural Troupe of the Chinese Armed Police. It was his fourth visit to his hometown in 44 years and he was very excited.

"When I came, the plane flew over the Badain Jaran Desert for a full 20 minutes. It was really great." Aribuji was very proud of the desert.

But he showed no particular pride over his career as a professional singer. "Actually I always wanted to go to school. My father died when I was young. I had to help tending sheep, cutting wool, milking them and also tending camels. I could slaughter sheep by myself when I was



nine years old."

I could tell that slaughtering sheep was a skill marking the maturity of desert men.

"I did not go to school until I was 12. To go to school, I rode a big camel out of the desert. Each trip took three days and I went home every six months. In 1956, Alxa League opened a middle school. I had just finished the fourth year in primary school and went to the middle school, still on camelback. It took me nine days and I became one of the first middle students in Alxa League. Later, people came to recruit for the army. They asked us to sing and I was selected. At the time, I could not even read the music score. I was not cut out to be a professional singer."

I remarked: "You must have had a good voice."

He replied: "If you have time to listen to others sing while you are here, you will know that everyone at Badain Jaran has a beautiful voice."

Going to the Largest Lake on Horseback

I met Jihuleng who had come to visit Aribuji and was about to leave. A sturdily built Mongolian, he had a healthy dark red complexion. A bit shy, he always smiled when he spoke.

He lived at Nortu, the largest and most beautiful lake in the Badain Jaran Desert, about two hours away from Sumin Jaran.

I asked to visit his home and he readily agreed. We went by horse. In the past, people always rode on camels. But the drought was particularly serious this year and the camels too tired to travel so people rode horses. I thought the trip sounded romantic.

The reality was nothing like romantic. This was the highest desert in the world with sand dunes rising three to four hundred metres continually appearing in our path. Jihuleng had picked a most docile horse for me and we followed closely behind him.

Jihuleng loved his horse. When it panted for air he would stop and when going up big slopes, he dismounted to reduce the horse's load. I also jumped off. Appreciating the kindness, my horse no longer cast me side looks.

One great challenge was a 50-degree slope we had to cross. Below was a sand pit about a hundred metres deep. The horses were experienced desert travellers, with every step their hooves sinking into the sand.

1. A photo of residents at Sumin Jaran.
2. Mr. Jihuleng and his beloved horses.
3. Blue and peaceful lake with reeds.
4. Sand, lake and residence form an unique idyll.





Having crossed the final sand dune, I saw his home. In the distance, a row of houses sat by Nortu Lake, the largest in the desert. Thick reeds grew in the

lake surrounded by abruptly rising sand dunes. Strangely enough, this lake has no fairy shrimps. During the shrimp craze, most other lakes were crowded but this one remained tranquil. Jihuleng told me the place was very safe. Whatever you left outside the house would not be touched.

Jihuleng's dog came out to greet him, barking a welcome at his return, and seeming to also greet me. Hurriedly I dismounted and, imitating Jihuleng, called the dog "Benbur". I rubbed its head to calm it down.

The First College Student Out of the Desert

The Jihulengs were the only family at the lake. The drought had taken away more than sixty sheep and his sheep shed was almost

empty. His house was large with the living room alone more than 30 square metres. His daughters were out at school and his wife had gone to the banner seat to look after their kids. Normally, Jihuleng lived by himself by the huge lake.

He proved to be very hospitable, boiling water to make tea, fetching a big plate of deep-fried doughnuts, crispy, sweet and fragrant with milk.

I looked at several family photo albums. His eldest daughter was his greatest pride. A student at Beijing University of Science and Technology, she is now studying for enrollment in a master's programme. She is the first college student from the desert.

"Your children must cost you a lot of money to go to school?"

"My income from tending the animals has all been spent on my kids and it is still not enough." The rather reticent Jihuleng spoke slowly and softly. "Last year an American study mission came, accompanied by people from Lanzhou Desert Research Institute. I rented out my camels and worked for them over a dozen days, earning more than 10,000 yuan, with which I paid for the tuition. This year has been too dry and the tuition for a master's student is 8,000 yuan a year...."





He said his daughter came back every vacation, for she missed home very much.

"How does she travel since travelling is so difficult?"

"Always on camelback. Long before the vacation begins, she sends word and I wait for her by the desert edge."

A moving scene appeared in my mind's eye. Jihuleng and his daughter leave home, climb on a camel and travel out of the desert. They journey during the day and in the evening sleep in the sand on a piece of felt. The understanding camel sleeps by its master's side, shielding him from the cold. The night is long but at first light they set off again. They travel for three days before he sees his daughter off by the edge of the desert. Then the father returns to the desert to continue to work, tending sheep, and raising camels to save money for his daughter's next year of tuition.

A Telegraph Message of Safety

The afternoon before I left Sumin Jaran, I learned to my surprise that telegraphs could be sent from here.

I could not remember how many years ago I last sent a telegraph. In a world of mobile phones and the Internet, I thought the telegraph had long backed out of history.

Mr. Gao, the telegrapher, lived here with his whole family. Every day there were two time frames for sending telegraphs: 10:10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The post office at the banner seat received the messages and relayed them on.

I sent a message to my family saying: "At Badain Jaran Desert, safe and sound.... This message is of particular value and please save." My message had 70 characters, each cost 0.14 yuan. Altogether I spent less than 10 yuan. I asked him how many people sent messages. He said in the past very few as people mostly lived inside the desert. Last year, with the army of fairy shrimp egg diggers, business increased. On average, two people a day sent telegraphs.

I calculated that if a message earned him 10 yuan and with 60

messages a month, the monthly income would be 600 yuan. But Mr. Gao's monthly salary was 700 yuan. Apparently it was a public service.

A Visit to Bag Jaran

We were all very reluctant to leave Sumin Jaran. Early in the morning, Samteng got busy, slaughtering sheep, washing vegetables. The rule was guests would leave only after they had eaten.

At the farewell party, the host repeatedly toasted us. Aribuji, who left with us, told me he had no idea when he could come back again. His eyes were wet.

We continued to travel west and after about 10 km we saw Bag Jaran Lake. Director Buhe told me that Aochier, a friend of his, lived there and asked if I wanted to visit him. Of course, I said. Immediately Bagna turned the jeep down a huge slope.

Aochier, who had been sorting out licorice root, insisted we stay, slaughter sheep, drink and sing. I liked his idea for the weather was exceptionally good, compensation for the last two days of gloomy weather.

Aochier was the head of a village of 25 households with a population of more than 90 people, about a quarter of the entire population in the Badain Jaran Desert. Though they lived apart, the relationship among the villagers was good. Every year they had a village meeting, with a representative from each family coming over on camelback.

After the craze for fairy shrimp eggs in 2000, all the lakes and ponds were contracted out. Aochier contracted Bag Jaran. Since his family was not big enough for all the work, his brother and sister-in-law came over. He even hired a worker from Gansu.

Apart from fairy shrimp eggs, he dug natural licorice root growing by the lake. A kilogram of the root brought in six yuan and each day he

1. White saline-alkali drifting on the Yintur Lake.
2. High yield salt lakes at Badain Jaran.
3. Grand banquet with Aochier's family.
4. Where are those camels going?



could harvest 30 kilograms. I saw his sister-in-law separating the roots and cutting them into small sections. Then she bound them into bundles ready to be shipped out.

Favouring Men over Women

Not far from Bag Jaran are the Yintur Sacred Springs at a lake surrounded by a wide open area. The sky was reflected in the mysterious deep blue water. In the Badain Jaran Desert are many springs. What made Yintur different were the 108 springs on a mid-lake island of merely three square metres. Hence its name.

A couple of years ago, a group of German scientists studied them. One of the women scientists rowed a boat to the island, but the springs stopped as she approached. Once she left, they flowed again. Apparently, the springs favoured men over women.

The springs were widely known in history. Generations of Alxa princes took the spring water by camel to their palace hundreds of kilometres away. They did not understand its composition of trace elements but strongly believed in the magical effect of this natural phenomenon. Now the springs are praised by foreigners. A German couple come to the place every year to drink the special water.

I borrowed a waterproof suit worn for catching fairy shrimp eggs and walked toward the middle of the lake with two empty bottles. I saw a great number of deep red fairy shrimps. I took care with every step fearing I would trample them to death.



2

The coldness of the water penetrated through the suit. At the island, the water was waist deep. I went around the tiny island and found water emerging from among stone cracks and grass. I scooped the water up with both palms, and found it to be pure mineral water. The lake is salty but the spring water proves sweet all year round!



1

Declining Price of Baby Fairy Shrimps

Yintur was a hot spot during the shrimp craze when the yield was very high. Now a Fujian businessman had contracted the lake and brought in 10 workers from Gansu, who lived in a tent. I met the businessman and asked him about this strange plankton.

Fairy shrimps live in a mix of fresh and salt water. China has few places where this plankton can thrive. Most of the Badain Jaran lakes are salty but when the ever lively spring water and a small quantity of rainwater mix with the salty water, ideal conditions are created for fairy shrimps.

When baby fairy shrimps are shipped to China's coastal areas, they are used to raise baby lobsters because of their high protein.

I was afraid the massive catch would upset the ecological balance. The businessman tried to allay my concerns, assuring me there would be a new generation of plankton next year. Later I posed the same question to a specialist at a desert research institute. The specialist did not have a ready answer, the fairy shrimp business was too new.

I asked the businessman about the harvest. He picked up a few grains of baby fairy shrimps and broke them with his nail, saying: "They are too small. It has been very dry and there is not enough fresh water to mix with the salty one. The harvest was better last year and the selling price was high too."

I carefully watched the workers. They used a special kind of net about a metre long with different sized holes. A man wearing a waterproof suit stood on the bank or in the shallows, tied up the end of the net and drew it through the water. A haul might bring in four kilograms. The shrimps were then put on a mat to dry in the sun. People came especially to buy them.

The businessman told me with a sad look that during the peak

season last year, a worker could bring in 50 kilograms of plankton a day. Things had been very bad this year. He had spent 200,000 yuan to contract the lake but to date had managed to harvest only some 0.5 tons and the income was just enough to pay back his investment for the contract. He expected a loss of some 100,000 yuan this year.

Unending Drinking and Singing

Dinner at the home of Aochier turned out to be a big feast with over a dozen people sitting around a huge makeshift table. By the table were several cartons of the local brew — Desert King brand of liquor. Clearly these were serious drinkers.

A huge basin filled with steaming mutton was brought out. People began to enjoy the meat, and drank and sang. Aribuji was the first to sing a Mongolian folk song. His professional skill coupled with his homesickness captivated an attentive audience.

People clapped and cheered him. Then they toasted each other.

Aochier sang next. True as Aribuji had said, everyone in Badain Jaran had a beautiful voice. The singing and drinking were continuous. Amazing to think that among a few families living so far apart, there should be so many melodious songs. Aribuji told me that all these songs were memorized and passed on from one generation to the next. He had not forgotten them even though he had left the place many years ago.

Both the songs and the liquor were intoxicating, but these people were different from those living outside the desert. When they drink, desert people don't talk senselessly. Since they had nothing to hide in their lives, and were down to earth in temperament, they could afford to be the same whether sober or drunk. The only difference was that they had difficulty standing steadily, had glazed eyes and a darker complexion.

The most emotional person was Aribuji, whose eyes filled with tears. It had been many years since he had been treated with the kind of honesty typical of desert settlers.

The Seven Fairies

Aochier accompanied us in another vehicle as we left Bag Jaran, so we could

help each other on the way. His truck was loaded with licorice root and baby fairy shrimps.

On the way, the vehicle broke down and we stopped to repair it. The work took two hours and I used the time to take photos. Not far away was a 500-metre-tall sand hill. Aochier told me its name was Bilutu and from its top one could see seven lakes, said to have been formed by seven fairies.

It was one of the singing sand hills that send out a rustling sound when the wind is strong, "as if a mother camel was calling its baby." Aochier's attempts to describe the singing sand in familiar terms sounded particularly moving and interesting.

As they repaired the vehicle, I tried to climb the sand hill but I was very tired. I used the excuse that the weather was too bad to take good pictures and turned back after climbing a short distance. I walked noisily, trying to get the sand to sing. It had rained recently so I did not hear a voice "as if a mother camel was calling its baby".

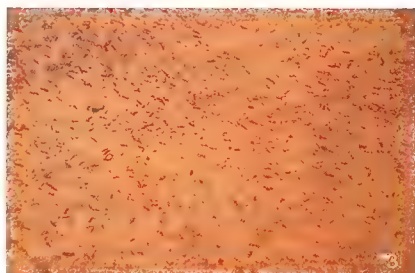
With a mischievous face, Director Buhe asked me if I had seen the seven fairies. I said they were too far away. He said actually I had seen them and they were his wife, Bagna's wife, Aochier's wife, Jihuleng's wife and....

I laughed and commented that all the seven fairies had come down from heaven. I was lucky that I had not taken the trouble of going to the top of the hill.

C

Translated by Huang Youyi

1. The Yintur Sacred Springs is located on a small island of only three square metres.
2. A herdsman fishing for fairy shrimp (by Yang Xiao).
3. The fairy shrimps are swimming between fresh and salt water.
4. People from other regions fish for fairy shrimp.



Flying Amidst Pear Flowers

A Visit to Jiujianpeng in Linyi of Shandong

Photos by Wang Bin, Bao Yicheng

Article by Wang Bin

Amidst the sea of white blossoms, I was flying.

Amidst the sea of white blossoms, I was flying.

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Seeing Pear Flowers for the First Time

Jiujianpeng (Nine-room House) is located in the Tianbo Township of Linyi in the southeast of Shandong Province. It used to be part of the region of the Yimeng Mountains. On the way to there, I was amazed by the sea of white blossoms on the pear trees. Villages near and far were all submerged in it. There were occasional red houses hidden in the folds of mountains. White clouds in the distance, just like banks of white pear flowers, seemed to land on the mountains. I quickly set up the tripod and locked my camera on it to catch such beautiful scenery. As the sunlight was too strong, I used a brown lens and the result turned out quite satisfactory.

It was already dusk when we got on the jeep and continued our journey. Before we said goodbye to the villagers, they advised us to go to Qishiye (Grotesque Rock Valley), a picturesque place. We were moved by those simple and enthusiastic mountain dwellers.



One fellow traveller said that when he had been in Tibet taking pictures, he came across a man who asked for payment for having his photo taken. Photographers were already nothing new to Tibetans.

It was past seven o'clock in the evening when we got to a small inn. A bright moon rose and cascaded silvery light on to nearby pear flowers, which seemed even more graceful. That night I slept soundly, partly because I was so exhausted and partly because it was so quiet. I dreamt we all grew wings and flew amidst pear flowers....

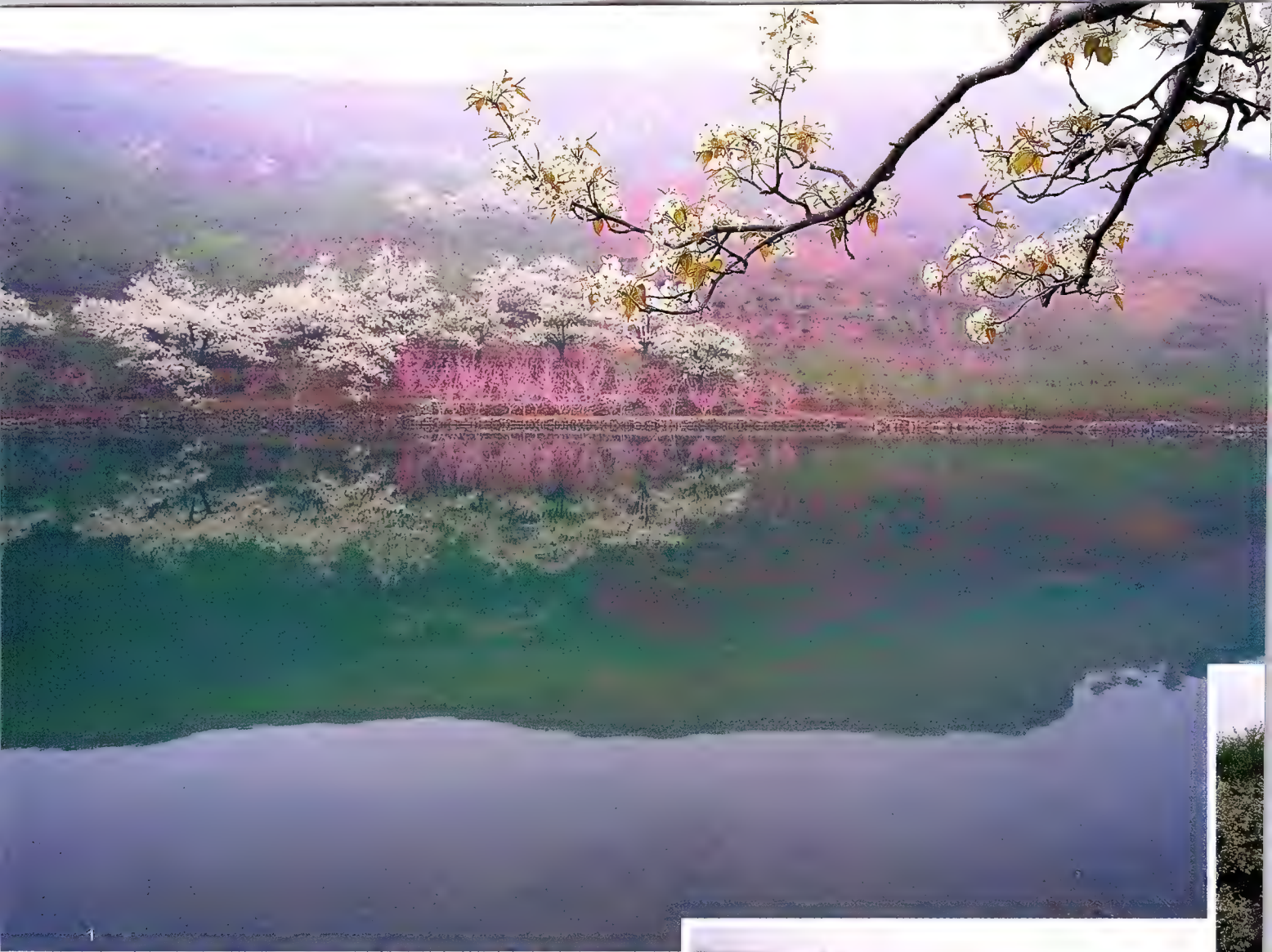
Jiujianpeng in Flowers

The next day, we went to Jiujianpeng. It was first built in 1741, sixth year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty. It was said that one day a refugee named Liu and his wife came to this place.

As they found it cool in summer and warm in winter, they decided to settle down. The couple was hard-working and later built the nine-room house, all laid with rocks, hence the name of the place. Between 1941 and 1963, the people living in it gradually moved out. After 1963, it was turned into a school. Today, simple stone desks and a small blackboard still remain in one room.

This house was set facing south. Standing in front of it, one has a panoramic view of mountains and terraced fields. It was most agreeable to enjoy the breeze there. The owner, an elderly man, was

1. Every spring, Jiujianpeng of Linyi is a sea of flowers.
2. The local revenue mainly comes from pear trees. Wherever there is a mountain, there are pear trees.



having his meal when we got there. At the sight of us, he hurriedly put down his bowl and chopsticks and greeted us warmly. We asked if it was at all possible for us to build a house and retire there. The environment was so good, the air so fresh. Yes, of course, he said. We had a picture taken with the old man by the wall of the house. We told him that we would come back to see him again in autumn and then waved goodbye. He waved his hand saying he would treat us to pears and peaches at that time.

We had some wonderful games for lunch. Over the food, we discussed how to take pictures of pear blossoms. One said he had been taking photos of pear flowers for three years and found it very difficult to get a satisfactory picture without a primary object among the masses of blossom. Later on, I recalled how I had taken pictures of pear flowers and concluded it wouldn't do to take pictures just for the sake of the flowers alone. Only when they were taken together with people or surroundings, would a good picture be possible. Such a picture would reflect the local life and uniqueness of the place.

At dusk, we sauntered towards a fork in the road and caught sight of a stone house in the distance. As it was surrounded by a backdrop of pear and peach blossoms, the place looked extremely enchanting. My colleagues quickly grabbed their photographic gear and ran towards it. Though I was the youngest of our group, I was washed out and did not



want to do anything after two exhausting days. I had taken only a few hurried pictures when I got off the jeep.

The night in Jiujianpeng was tranquil. I could hear a gurgling stream at the back of the house. My companions even joked that one could hear the coughing of an old man in another hamlet and a woman humming a lullaby. Indeed I had never had experienced such deathly quietness.

Walking Among Flowers

On the third day we got up early, as usual. The weather turned out to be rather disappointing, and the temperature dropped too. We

planned to go to the Mt. Tianbao forest. We had heard so much about its beautiful scenery. Besides, there was good scenery along the way. Since the road was under construction, we had to go on foot.

On the way, we noticed a huge rock slope. According to local residents, water falling down the slope in summer was rather spectacular. It was a paradise for children. They would glide down the slope for some 30 metres and frolic naked in the water. It was a natural slide. There was a stone trough at the foot of the slope. It was smooth and shiny, obviously a result of rubbing by those kids' buttocks. It was not difficult to imagine how delighted and wild they must be.

The Mt. Tianbao Reservoir was our main target for picture taking that day. When we arrived at the reservoir, it was overcast and not ideal for taking pictures. We moved forward a hundred metres and our eyes brightened. The limpid water was as calm as a mirror. Pear and peach blossoms and mountains on the other side were reflected in the

water. Such wonderful scenery was rare and ideal for photo-taking. But after a few minutes a breeze swept across, rippling the surface of the water and breaking up the reflection. So we had to take a rest and wait for the water to resume

its calmness. Sure enough, 20 minutes later, the water became still again. We changed our positions and took more photos. Unfortunately, the wind sprung up again and we had to give up. Soon it began to drizzle. It was imperative to protect our equipment. So we packed up all our cameras and lenses. Luckily I brought with me a water-proof bag and quickly stuffed all my things in it.

The drizzle did not let up but we were still in high spirits. Heedless of the rain, we walked on, chatting and laughing. We filed through those pear flowers and put to the back of our minds our busy schedule and all worldly worries. We seemed to be at the top of the world.

We were pretty quick going down the slope. The path grew narrower and there were more pear trees around us with thick foliage over our heads. We seemed to be walking through a tunnel made of pear blossoms. I imagined myself to be a bee flying among flowers collecting honey....

1. Mt. Tianbao Reservoir is surrounded by pear blossoms.
2. A picturesque view at the Tianbao Reservoir.
3. Pear trees is a perennial deciduous tree of the rose family.
4. Pear flowers were cultivated for decorative purpose as early as in the Tang Dynasty.

Tips for the Traveller



Transport

Jiujianpeng is located in Difang Town of Pingyi County in Linyi City, Shandong Province. Though deep in the mountains, it is easily accessible. Roads are all in fairly good condition. There are three main routes to get there:

1. Fly from Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Beijing or Shanghai to Jinan. Then catch a train or bus going to Linyi (fare: 55 yuan). From Linyi take a bus bound for Pingyi and get off at Difang Town. The fare is 5 yuan.
2. Take a train from Guangzhou to Liangshan. Change to a bus going to Jining (fare: 6 yuan), then take another bus going between Jining and Linyi and get off at Difang Town (fare: 25 yuan).
3. Fly directly from Guangzhou to Linyi. It is a daily service and the fare is 1,080 yuan. Take a bus at Linyi to go straight to Difang Town.

Accommodation

Pingyi Hotel Tel: (539) 421 1163 Difang Hotel Tel: (539) 439 1929

Travel Agency

Jining Staff Travel Service Tel: (537) 226 7667
Linyi Shan Qing Travel Service Tel: (539) 830 0001
One-day flower viewing trip: 88 yuan

Reminders

- ◆ The best tourist season for Jiujianpeng is April, May or September. Pear flower blossoms in late March till the end of April. The best travel route is to take a train to Liangshan, where you may first visit the water-logged Liangshan, and make an excursion to Qufu to see the Confucius Temple.
- ◆ The Qianjiuwan Inn which is surrounded by pear flowers. The price is cheap, six yuan per night for each person. However, conditions are not that good. There are only ten beds. So contact the inn in advance (Tel: 539-437 1059).



THE CHARM OF QUJING

Photos & article
by Suolang Zhaxi

Mention Yunnan Province, and most people think of Dali, Lijiang, Zhongdian and Xishuangbanna, the province's most famous tourist destinations. But few travellers from other provinces, let alone from overseas, are familiar with Qujing. This will soon change, because visitors to this newly tourism developed area are pleasantly surprised by its beauty and very special attractions: I certainly was!

I visited Qujing with five friends. Not expecting very much, I was simply looking for some relaxation during a break in my busy schedule.

Pleasant Days in Qujing

After our plane landed in Kunming, we took a bus to Qujing. The new highway is a godsend: it shortens the formerly four or five hour drive to only one and a half hours, well worth the 20-yuan fare!

Qujing is the second largest city in Yunnan. Its streets are broad and clean; its buildings, all in a simple, unostentatious architectural style, are well laid out. There are no looming forests of skyscrapers, rather, there is a feeling of spaciousness and light. The city has two

very large squares, Zhujiang (Pearl River) and Nanmen (South Gate), both ablaze with colourful flowers and home to some fascinating sculptures. When night falls, many people gather in these squares. In Zhujiang Square, I was drawn to a big crowd around the musical fountain. As I got closer, I found the fountain itself was also crowded with people. A group of young people were dancing in the water, following the music and having the time of their lives. When the music stopped, so did the fountain, leaving the dancers suddenly exposed, and a bit embarrassed standing up to their knees in water — soaking wet of course! I was told youngsters came to put on this impromptu show and have some fun almost every night, and coming to watch them has become a special entertainment for tourists to Qujing.

The next morning, when I visited the square again, I got another

1. The cave in Maxiong Mountain, from where the Pearl River originates.
2. The trail that Zhuge Liang once left his footsteps on.
3. South Gate Square of Qujing.





surprise. As before, there were many people there, but most of them were women. Were the men of Qujing too lazy to get up so early? All those women were busy with their morning exercises. Divided into different groups, some of them were practising swordplay, others were doing Taiji boxing or the Fan Dance, each to the appropriate music. Their concentration and skillful movements reminded me of scenes in a TV show about an ancient Chinese martial arts hero that I watched recently.

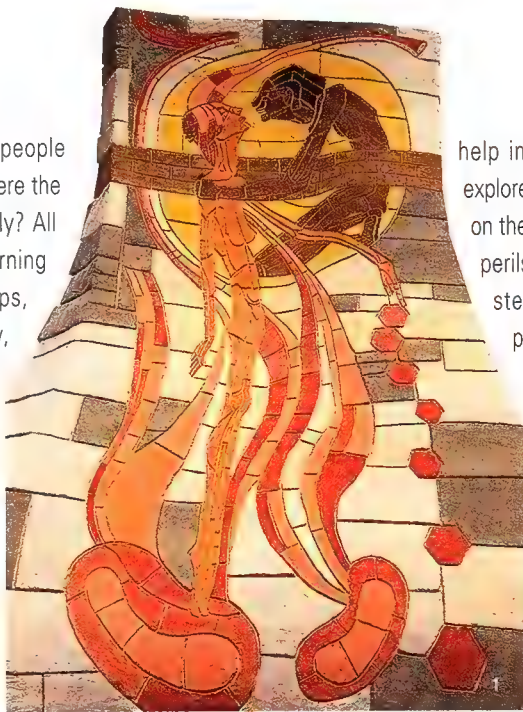
☉ Transport : Daily flights from Hong Kong to Kunming. Scheduled buses from Kunming to Qujing are available; the two-hour journey costs 19 yuan.

☉ Accommodation : Qujing Hotel: 100 yuan/room.

Source of the Pearl River

The second day, our hosts arranged a tour for us to see the source of the Pearl River. I was really excited!

While thinking about exploring the source of a river, I could not



help imagining a series of thrilling scenes. The explorers would have a stiff drink before they set off on their dangerous adventure, preparing to face the perils of camping in the wilderness, climbing up steep trails with the risk of avalanches ever present, and all the while suffering high altitude sickness.

The Pearl River is China's third largest river. It runs 5,000 km through the provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi to reach Modaomen in Guangdong, where it empties into the South China Sea. The Pearl River nourishes the Pearl River Delta, which leads the country in terms of economic development. However, even those living in the delta seldom bother to

think about the origin of their water. In 1637, the geologist Xu Xiake began his search for the source of the Pearl River. After travelling for a year, he finally reached the town of Zhanyi, but was unable to make it to the source, another 50 km upstream. Nevertheless, today, people have built the Xiake Cottage and Xiake Hotel in the scenic area, which I hope comforts this brave man for his disappointment.

In 1985, after a comprehensive exploration, the Pearl River Water



Conservancy Committee decided that Chushui Cave on the east side of Maxiong Mountain is the origin of the Pearl River. A ceremony was held at the site.

The origin of the Pearl River is a cave, from where a narrow stream gushes out. Inside the wet, cool cave, there are many wonderful stalactites. Traces of human activity dating back some 10,000 years were found in 1985, when the cave was discovered.

Maxiong Mountain was where Zhuge Liang, a talented strategist of the Shu Kingdom of the Three Kingdoms period (220—

280 A.D.), captured and released Meng Huo, a chieftain of the Yi ethnic group, seven times. Ruins of the ancient trail can be seen here and there. They conjure up the heroic image of Zhuge Liang. On the top of the mountain is a huge compass, richly

carved with such things as the 12 constellations, the 12 animals representing the years of the Chinese zodiac and sticks with fortune-tellings written on them given by Guanyin, or the Goddess of Mercy. You tell your own fortune by turning the compass according to your year of birth. I didn't try it, though, because I was afraid that if the result was too negative, I would be worried all day long, while if my future was very good, I would be overjoyed. I prefer to follow nature's rule.

The Dragon King's Temple, which used to stand on the east slope of the mountain, has long collapsed. On its ruins, a grand Buddhist temple has been built. Interestingly, behind the temple has been added a Tianhou Temple, where Chinese people in the coastal areas worship Mazu, the Goddess of the Sea.

◎Transport : Take Bus No. 3 from Qujing and alight at the county town of Zhanyi; a scheduled bus sets off from Zhanyi to the Pearl River Source daily at 8 a.m. and returns at 4 p.m.; fare: 20 yuan.

◎Admission : 30 yuan.

◎Accommodation : Xiaoke Cottage Hotel at Pearl River Source: 80 yuan/room.

Colourful Sand Sculptures of Luliang

After about half an hour's drive, we arrived at the Luliang Sand Forest, where an international sand sculpture competition had just ended. As soon as we entered the park we saw a group sculpture entitled "The



Charm of Coloured Sand", which depicted the history and culture of the area. Included in the work were images of the ancient Yuanmou men, Asian elephants and characters in the story of Zhuge Liang and Meng Huo. A clerk of the park told us that when the international competition was held a few days ago, the venue was crowded with people. Many movie stars had been invited to add glamour and fun

to the event.

Twenty-six sculptors from 12 countries had participated in the competition, and left behind their creative works to form a colourful world of sand sculptures.

Stone forests and earth forests are not unfamiliar to tourists to Yunnan, but sand forests are something rare, not to mention a coloured one like this that covers six square kilometres of land. The sand forest was formed 360 million years ago, during the orogenic movement of the Himalayas. The lakebed rose to become a terrace made of loose sand, pebbles, earth and chips of other elements. After years of erosion, sand dunes, peaks and pillars in as many as 12

1. Sand sculpture: Romeo and Juliet.
2. The sand forest has become a tourist spot in recent years.
3. Sand sculpture: Notre Dame Cathedral.
4. Sculptors left many valuable art works in the sand forest.
5. Sculpture: Aladdin's Lamp.
6. Tourists resting in the sand forest.





colours, including red, yellow, white, purple, blue, green and black, were formed. Luliang is the only place in the world where such a natural geological wonder has been found.

Scattered in the sand forest are reproductions of several ancient battlefields. They were built for the shooting of TV plays, such as *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. These sites add even more interest to this scenic spot.

And visitors, too, can try out their sculpting skills. The materials are provided by the park, so artists and tourists from home and abroad can display their talents any time they visit the sand forest.

We entered the sand forest hurriedly. There, we found a world of remote antiquity. Sand peaks rocketed high into the sky; distant sand dunes appeared in various shapes. The most eye-catching, of course, were the sand sculptures. Sand is literally used to represent things that can hardly stick to one another. But here the sculptures remained in good shape. Furthermore, their surfaces were hard and smooth, seeming to have a protective shell. This is a result of the chemical reactions between water and mineral elements contained in the sand.

Beach of Coloured Sand

The theme of the latest international sand sculpture competition was "Approaching Masterpieces". Through various skills such as digging, piling and carving, the participants created sculptures that represent world famous literary works.

One especially memorable work was inspired by *The Divine Comedy*, by the great Italian poet, Dante Alighieri: its coloured statues of God, devils, the sky and the sea vividly told stories from this masterpiece. A Russian artist created the image of Paul Kocharkin, the hero of the novel *How Steel Is Made*, which won him a first prize.

The sculpture "Romeo and Juliet" had the richest colours. Through abstract geometrical patterns, the artist from Belgium brought this classic tragedy alive.

Many works were based on

classic Chinese novels. Among them were famous scenes from *A Dream of the Red Mansions*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Assignment of the Gods*. Comparatively, the Chinese sculptures were more picture-like, with specific images, and not as creative as the foreign works. After all, sand sculpture is a new art in China.

Two pieces from the previous competition were still preserved at the site. Though their colours had faded, both of the old sculptures remained in good condition, despite the fact that they had stood in the open air for a whole year. They prove the special quality of Luliang sand.

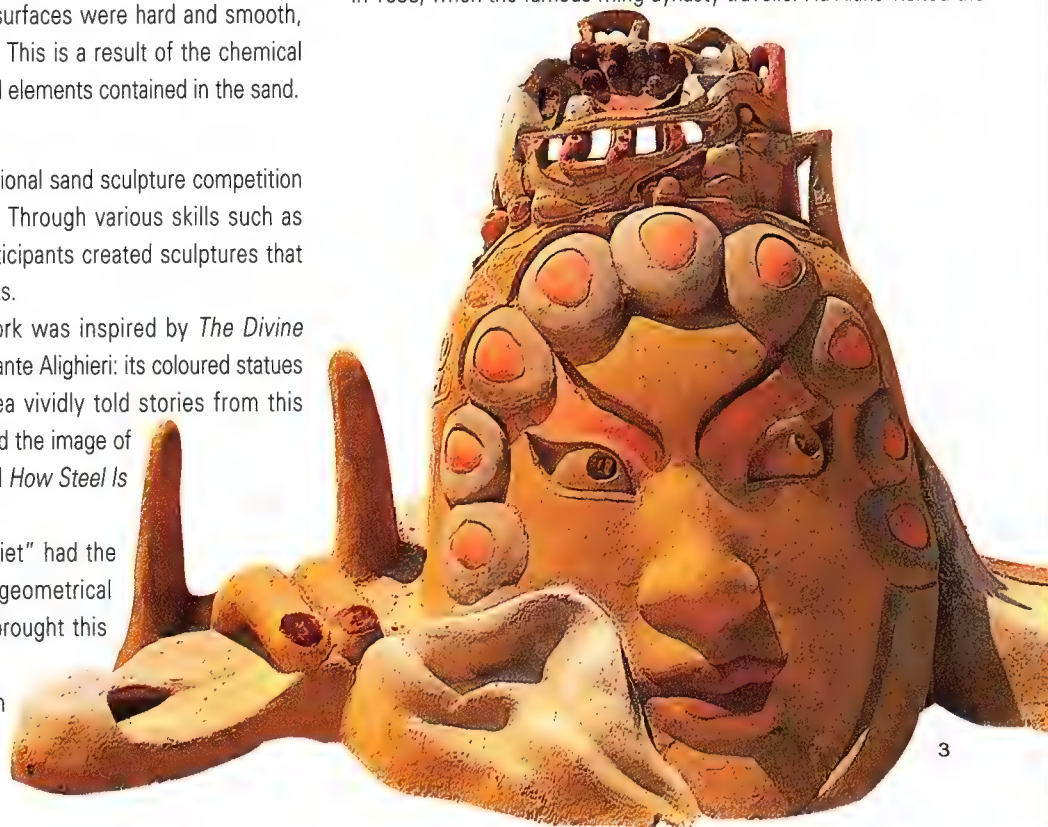
- ◎Transport: It takes an hour from Qujing to Luliang by bus; express bus: 15 yuan, ordinary bus: 10 yuan. Bus going from Luliang to the Sand Forest costs 2 yuan per trip.
- ◎Admission: 40 yuan
- ◎Accommodation: Shacun Hotel: 80 yuan/room.
Luliang Hotel: 80 yuan/room.

Photographers: Almost as Many as the Bees

Luoping's name literally means "flat", but it does not reflect the true situation of its topography. The gracefully rising and falling terrain form a beautiful landscape. Luoping is famous for its rapeseed flowers. It was a pity that when we arrived, the charming scenery of rapeseed flowers blooming in the boundless fields was gone.

Rapeseed is a popular plant that has been cultivated in Luoping for over 1,000 years. In spring, when golden flowers bloom in a vast land of 20,000 hectares, they create grand views that are a wonder to behold. Not only bees are attracted: numerous photographers also gather here, their works making Luoping increasingly famous.

Luoping's natural landscape is as beautiful as its rapeseed flowers. In 1638, when the famous Ming-dynasty traveller Xu Xiake visited the





place, he praised it highly.

I decided to take photos of the sunrise on the Shiwan (Hundred Thousand) Mountains with my friend, Rachel. We got up early but when we finally reached the pavilion on the mountain, the sun had already risen!

The next day, I got up even earlier and went there alone. I arrived in time and caught the view of turbulent waves of the cloud sea surging over the peaks. In a mere moment, the sun jumped up, followed by a belt of cloud that floated through the middle of it, forming the Chinese character “日” for “sun”.

- ◎ Transport : Luoping can be reached by train from Guangzhou or Nanning; a hard sleeper costs 288 yuan and 137 yuan respectively. Transport in the county is not convenient. It costs 150 yuan/day to rent a car, with which you can also visit the Duoyi River and Jiulong Waterfalls.
- ◎ Accommodation : A three-star hotel charges 180 yuan for a standard room in the busy (rapeseed flower blooming) season, 120 yuan in the slack season. Others charge from 140~120 yuan in the busy season and 90-70 yuan in the slack season.



The Primitive Duoyi River

The Duoyi River was a major stop on our itinerary. I have travelled many great mountains and rivers, so there is usually no expectation of excitement, wherever I go. Unexpectedly, this time, when I saw the picturesque landscape of the Duoyi River and the natural and simple lifestyle retained there, I was deeply moved. The river is unbelievably clear. Its water comes from a cave in the valley. The spring water flows down from one terrace to another, creating more than 30 small travertine waterfalls. At Sanjiangkou, on the border of three provinces, it ends its 12 km course and joins the Nanpan River and Huangni (Yellow Mud) River, tributaries of the Pearl River.

The Duoyi River brings life to the land on its banks. Villages on the riversides are natural scenic spots. Many villagers were waiting by the roadside with their horses for hiring and dozens of rickshaws were lined up. It cost only five yuan to take a ride either on horseback or in a rickshaw, but I chose walking as the best way to enjoy the scenery. Walking along the riverbank, I came across several waterfalls, Xinzhai (New Village), Langwai (Twisted Waves), Leigong (Lord of Thunder)... each bearing an interesting name. Big banyan trees covered the banks. In their shadows that extended into the river, bamboo rafts floated up and down; at the mountain foot, farmers were ploughing in their fields and children were playing games. Though the place has been developed into a tourist spot, the original residents have stayed and maintained their way of life. I believe this is the right way to develop

1. An artwork by Chinese sand sculptor: The Story of Yue Fei.
2. An elderly lady with bound feet visiting the sand forest.
3. Family Treasures, a sculpture left from the previous competition.
4. Poetic rural lifestyle has been retained in the Duoyi River.
5. The magnificent Shiwan Mountains.



new tourist areas. Only in this way can visitors see the real nature and poetry of rural life.

This does not mean there are no man-made attractions on the Duoyi River. The Waterwheel Museum is one example. There are numerous waterwheels on the river, but not many are still functioning as useful tools in people's daily life. The local authorities built a waterwheels museum with several dozen of this special kind of primitive machine. The museum shows how water-power is used in



irrigation, milling, grinding and sawing. I saw a huge steel saw moving back and forth, driven by a waterwheel.

- ◎Transport : Scheduled buses are available from the county town of Luoping to Duoyi River Scenic Area, fare: 4 yuan.
- ◎Admission : 20 yuan; horse ride: 5 yuan/person; rafting: 10 yuan/person.

The Three Gorges of Lubuge Canyon

It took us an hour to drive from the county town to Lubuge Canyon, which lies on the Huangni River. The canyon consists of three gorges. In the 1980s a hydropower station was constructed in the canyon. The water level rose and the formerly imposing gorges became a mirror-like lake.

We boarded a boat and began our cruise in the gorges. The boat sailed on, carrying us to scenic attractions such as "Monkey Fetching the Moon from the Water", "Seapacifying Magic Needle", "Upside Down Bamboo Shoot", "Giant Roc Breaking Wings" and "Twin Elephant Drinking Water". Suddenly our vision broadened and on the left, a 140-metre-high waterfall, called Feilong (Flying Dragon), appeared. It marked the end of our river cruise.





⊗Transport : It costs 4 yuan to take a bus from Luoping to Lubuge, from where you can hire a car to reach the canyon; or you can take a bus from Luoping to Banjiao Town first and then go to the canyon by chartered bus for a fare of 7 yuan.

⊗Admission : Lubuge Canyon: 32 yuan/person; Underground Power Station: 25 yuan/person; cruise: 32 yuan/person.

Jiulong Waterfalls: the Largest in China

We spent our last day in Luoping visiting the Jiulong (Nine Dragons) Waterfalls. The huge waterfalls consist of 10 falls, which line up one after another like a ladder. The Jiulong Waterfalls are 56 metres high and 100 metres wide. They are the largest group of falls in the country, 1,000 square metres larger in size than the Huangguoshu

Waterfalls in Guizhou, which are so far recognised as the No. 1 falls in China.

The guide then arranged rafts for us so that we could get close to the downpour. It was a good idea, because we could take better pictures while playing with the water.

When we saw some people raft under the falls to bathe in the shower, we followed suit, first putting our cameras safely back in their cases, of course. It

was not easy to raft under the falls, though. A powerful downpour beat our heads and water crashed and splashed everywhere. We bathed in thrilling excitement. When we returned to shore, everybody was totally soaked.

Taking a cable car, we reached the View-watching Tower built on the top of the hill, a stop no visitor to this scenic area should miss. From here we watched the grand view of 10 falls cascading down. We then walked uphill to the road. A group of Buoyei women were making soles by the roadside. When they saw us, they began to do their business. "Do you want a horse ride? Only five yuan and you'll be taken to the first waterfall..." None of us responded. No horse would like to carry soaked bodies like ours, I guessed.

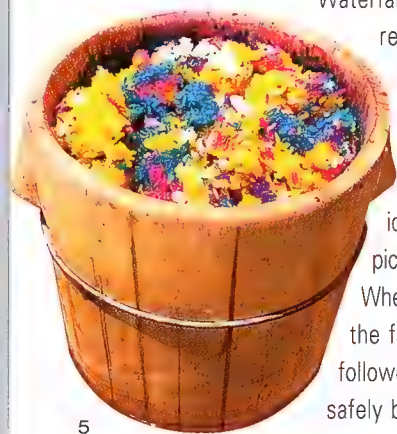
Translated by G. Shang

⊗Transport : Go to Banqiao first and change to a bus going to Jiulong Waterfalls; bus fares: 2 yuan for each ride.

⊗Admission : Jiulong Waterfalls: 30 yuan/person.

⊗Accommodation : It's recommended to stay in farmers' houses outside the park. It costs 30 yuan, including two meals per person.

1. Rafting on the Duoyi River is like travelling in wonderland.
2. The lake came into being after the hydropower station was built.
3. Waterwheels from various countries are displayed in the Waterwheel Museum.
4. The Jiulong Waterfalls are believed to be the largest waterfalls in China.
5. Coloured rice that the Buoyei people prepare with natural dyes.





Photos and article by Zhu Lin

TIBETAN SUTRA STREAMERS

*On the vast land of the West Region,
Sutra streamers are incarnations of warriors
In wind or snow
Unswervingly guarding Tibetans' faith
Fluttering in gale
They symbolise a tradition of the remote age
Colourful streamers are covered by scripts of Tibetan Buddhist sutra
Believing mountain wind will bring their wishes to the horizon*

Sutra Streamers at Chaoshan Festival

I can't remember the exact time of that trip. We were staying with a local resident who told us that the next day happened to be the annual Chaoshan Festival at the Four Maidens Mountain.

What good luck! The news made us rather excited. We set off before daybreak next morning. As we approached the mountaintop

with groups of local Tibetans we saw many other Tibetans, each holding a sutra streamer on a pole. The streamers were covered with lines from Tibetan Buddhist sutras. They walked towards a pagoda, next to a large tent in which a group of lamas were chanting sutra. On a hillside behind the tent Tibetans were planting their sutra streamers. Amidst lingering joss-stick smoke, I followed the Tibetans walking around the pagoda and watched them plant their poles into the ground. A strong sun shone overhead, its light beating down on the hillside. Soon the sound of Buddhist trumpets came from the tent. Streamers fluttered in the wind. That scene left a deep impression on me. Having planted their streamers, the Tibetans seemed to have accomplished something significant. Now members of each family sat together on the grassy ground and took out barley brew, glutinous rice cake, fruit, seasoned beef, etc. While they enjoyed their food, performances began. Each village sent a team to perform for the occasion.

Ever since then, wherever I went in Tibet, I have paid particular attention to sutra streamers. In the past, all I had known about them was that they were made from ordinary cloth and had many sutra lines written on them together with painted images of Buddha and other auspicious signs. Gradually I learned all those signs had special meanings. They first appeared in ancient sacrificial rituals and originated in the worship of the souls of animals. Tibetans believe that sutra streamers indicate one's fate or the five elements, namely, gold, wood, water, fire and earth. The scripts and images are block-printed. In certain places, they are rubbed from carved Mani stones. The paintings on those streamers are meticulously executed with strict and concise composition. In my eyes, they are superb pieces of art. I am so fond of them that I hang various colourful streamers on the window of my own study.

Varied Styles of Sutra Streamers at Different Places

Tibetan Buddhist streamers differ in style from place to place. In the Hongyuan and Zoigê Grasslands, Tibetans like to tie sutra streamers on leather straps. They believe that the grassland will remain fertile and the grass succulent due to the blessings bestowed by those streamers.

In Jiarong, a Tibetan settlement at Jinchuan in Sichuan Province, Tibetans like to hang sutra streamers on roofs of houses or temples and the trees at the entrance of a village. They pray to those streamers for strength. The streamers are supposed to ensure a good harvest.

In Shangri-La (previously called Zhongdian) of Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province, sutra streamers are hung in public on all happy occasions. Early in the morning, local residents first burn joss-sticks to expel

anything evil, then hoist string after string of streamers on a high hillside. By doing this, Tibetans pray for peace for Heaven and Earth, and for man and beast. Such streamers are also hung on narrow roads or dangerous mountain passes for the safe passage of all travellers.

In the Tibetan-inhabited county of Sêrtar in Kangba of Sichuan, a wooden pole dangling with sutra streamers can be as high as a score of metres. In the sunshine, their colours are extremely dazzling. During the horse race in Litang, riders hold their streamers high to flutter in the wind as if to siphon strength from them to win the race.

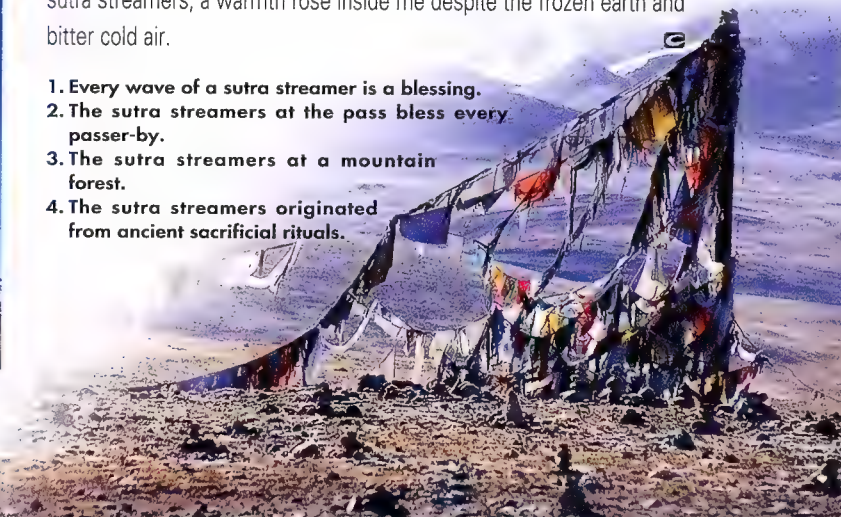
A Memorable Encounter High in the Mountains

I remember one windy day in October. We were heading for the Peak Qomolangma (Mt. Everest). En route to Nyalam, where we would pitch tents and pass the night, we decided to cross mountain pass, at 5,250 metres. Lack of oxygen, hunger, coldness and a sinking sun drove us to despair. Then came in sight a few sutra streamers planted in a pile of Mani stones. They were so striking in that world of white snow. The red, yellow, blue, green and white streamers waved dauntlessly in the gale, as if warmly greeting us. Facing those streamers, many thoughts came into my mind. Were they there to welcome us? Or rather to encourage us? I listened to the powerful sound they made as they flapped furiously. All of a sudden, I began to understand why Tibetans believed that every wave of a sutra streamer was a blessing, each as good as a complete chanting of a sutra. A sutra streamer generously blesses anyone near it.

In those wild, desolate mountains, colourful streamers is a sign of life. On the top of a white snow-capped mountain, looking at those sutra streamers, a warmth rose inside me despite the frozen earth and bitter cold air.



1. Every wave of a sutra streamer is a blessing.
2. The sutra streamers at the pass bless every passer-by.
3. The sutra streamers at a mountain forest.
4. The sutra streamers originated from ancient sacrificial rituals.



NEW ATTRACTIONS



1. The symbols of Taiwanese minorities are shown in the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Park.
2. Sightseeing rickshaws driving tourists down Chin Street. A 30-minute tour costs NTS 200.
3. Fried lotus seeds are fragrant and Q (a colloquial saying meaning "chewy"). Lotus tea is effective for a beautiful skin and curing lip ailments.



LOTUS IN BAIHE • WUFEN TRAIN IN WUSHULIN • INDIGENOUS MINORITIES IN SANDIMEN • BLUEFIN TUNA IN DUNGGANG • KAOHSIUNG HARBOUR SIGHTS

TAINAN — PINGTUNG — KAOHSIUNG

ADMIRING SOUTHERN TAIWAN CUSTOMS

Photos & article by Tsang Po Ki



HERE I AM IN TAIWAN AGAIN!

ZHONGXIAO ROAD EAST IN TAIPEI, TAILU COURT IN HUALIEN, KENGTING IN PINGTUNG,
ALISHAN IN CHIAI, AND KAOHSIUNG IN TAINAN....

THE PICTURES OF PAST TRIPS ARE STILL ALIVE IN MY MIND. ANYTHING FRESH THIS TIME?

PERHAPS I DID NOT PAY ENOUGH ATTENTION TO THOSE PLACES I HAVE BEEN TO.

TAIWAN IS A SMALL TERRITORY NEEDING YOUR PATIENT OBSERVATION.

PERSEVERE AND AT ANY MOMENT IT WILL AMAZE YOU.



TOURIST MAP OF SOUTHERN TAIWAN

TAINAN COUNTY

1st Stop: Seeing Lotus in Baihe Town

Transport: Bus from the Chiai (or Chiayi) Terminus to Guantzing or Baihe (or Paiho), and get off at the Neijiao Station. During the Lotus Festival

(May~July), there are special buses from the Kaohsiung Terminus.

Regarded as a very important place by locals, Baihe Town has been famous for the nearby Guantzing Hot Springs Scenic Area since the 1960s. Every July, the vast lotus display becomes the focus for tourists. Baihe lives up to its reputation as "the hometown of the lotus".

The two best times to pay homage to the lotus are 05:00~08:00 and 15:00~18:00, depending on the locations and species. The most time-honoured type, Shilian lotus, produces white flowers, but less seed than the Dagang and Jianlian lotuses, while Bailian lotus provides more seeds and is regarded locally as having the only pure white flower. Xiangshuilian lotus come in a range of colours-red, yellow, white, purple and orange. Its flowers can also be made into a fragrant tea much favoured by the public.

To make the best of the lotus season, one has to choose the appropriate time and right means of transport. One way to go is by bicycle, as Baihe Town is criss-crossed by many countryside paths. An ideal route for lotus appreciation is the triangle formed by the South 90 and South 92-1 roads in Zhumen and the Nan'er Expressway. Tourists may wish to visit the Ren'an Palace, former residence of the Zheng Clan and the Gan Clan. Liantan and Pidouzai are also ideal places where one can admire the lotus.



✿ Lotus appreciation routes / travel agencies

Baihe Township Headquarters

Add: 381 Sanmin Road, Yong'an Lane, Baihe Town.

Tel: 886-6-6855102 (ext. 4) / 6831404

Website: <http://baihe.tnhg.gov.tw>

✿ Lotus banquets and snacks

Recommended eatery: Zuiyuexuan Restaurant

Add: 32~8 Neijiaoli, Baihe Town.



Tel: 886-6-6851888/6817156 / 6816026

Tariff: NT\$3,300 for a table set for 10~13 people, featuring 12 dishes

Recommended eatery: Zuiyuxuan Restaurant

Add: 120~26 Dazhu Lane, Baihe Town.

Tel: 886-6-6852052 (day) / 6859997 (night)

Tariff: Glutinous rice dumplings with lotus seed and meat: NT\$30; rice puddings with lotus seed: NT\$30; lotus seed cool noodles: NT\$30; rice cooked in lotus leaves: NT\$50; pot of fragrant lotus seed tea: NT\$100.

✧ Staying in a village hostel

Recommended guesthouse: The Home of Sanshugong

Add: 30~20 Dazhu Lane, Dapaizhu, Baihe Town

Tel: 886-6-6855202 / 6850932

Twin-bedroom: NT\$1,350~1,500 (normal days);
NT\$1,600~2,000 (Lotus Festival). Rooms for four
to six people are also available.

Website: <http://home.kimo.com.tw/lotusshop.tw>



✧ Wushulin (The Dark Forest) Railway Station

To let tourists experience the Wufen Train, the sugar cane railway carriages has been converted into mini sight-seeing trains. Professional guides explain the tour on board. It is worth a try. Distance: 3 km. Time: one hour.

Closed on Mondays.

Tuesday to Friday: One train at 10:00 and 14:30 (excluding the booking of groups)

Saturday and Sunday: Hourly trains between 09:30 — 16:30.

Cost: NT\$100/ person

Contact person: Shen Boquan

Add: 184 Wulin Village, Houbi Township

Tel: 886-6-6852681

Website: <http://www.taisugar.com.tw/pl/index.htm>



2nd Stop: Riding the Wufen Train in Wushulin

Transport: Take a taxi from Baihe Town to Wushulin

The names "Yitouzai" and "Wufen train" probably mean a lot to the older generation in Tainan. "Yitouzai" is another name for the Wushulin Railway Station located near Baihe Town. The station, an elegant wooden building, was first started by the Japanese Meiji Sugar Co.Ltd. but not completed until December 1946. Due to its expanding business, the Meiji Sugar Co. Ltd. unveiled plans to build a new passenger route between Xinying and Fanshe (the old name for Dungshan). Once completed, the railway formed an important transport link between Baihe and Dongshan. Since the trains on this railway were only half the length of ordinary ones, they were called "Wufen" (half-length) trains. However, after 33 years of service, the Wushulin Railway Station faced closure. Nowadays it runs only for tourism purposes and is jointly operated by the new plant of the Taiwan Sugar Company and the Tainan Art Institute.

An agricultural centre specifically for planting orchids has also been set up at the railway station. Covering 46,000 square metres, the centre concentrates on butterfly orchids (*oncidium papilio*) which are sold to the United States and Japan, and have won awards in international orchids exhibitions.



PINGTUNG COUNTY

3rd Stop: Visiting Indigenous Peoples in Sandimen

Transport: Bus from Baihe (via the No.1 Expressway) to Jioru, then take a car to Pingtung, where there are buses to Shueimen every 20 minutes from 06:45 to 19:50. Then bus from Shueimen to Sandimen. The Pingtung Passenger Terminus: 886-8-7324103; the Pingke Sandimen Station: 886-8-7992265

1. In May, blooming lotuses in Baihe attract tourists from all over.
2. According to the lotus farmers, the shell and membrane have to be removed before picking out the seed for food.
3. Lotus pie has crispy skin and sweet dumplings.
4. Lianxiang Baihe Budao (A Walk in Baihe, Hometown of the Lotus), introduces the history of lotus-growing in Baihe Town and routes for lotus appreciation.
5. A vintage train on show at Wushulin Railway Station.
6. A pamphlet for the Wufen train in Wushulin.
7. Performances by Taiwanese minorities can be watched at the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Park.





The indigenous peoples of Taiwan, their history stretching back for over 6,000 years, can be divided into 10 groups. The largest is the Amis, with a total population of about 390,000, found mainly in the mountain valley from Hualien to Taitung and in the coastal plains of eastern Taiwan. The Shaos, gathered around the Sun Moon Lake, have the smallest population, about 300. Other indigenous groups include: the Yamis who live by both fishing and farming; the Puyumars who live in a matriarchal society; the Bunums who originate from the 3,952-metre high Yushan Mountain; the Atayals, also known as "the whale-face people"; the distinctive Paiwans and Rukais; the Tsous living around Alishan; and the Saisiats who still practise many old religious activities such as "pas-taii".

The Indigenous Peoples Cultural Park at Beiye Village in Majia Township, Pingtung County is an ideal place for tourists to learn about these tribes. Those seeking more detailed information about these peoples can take a free shuttle bus to the Tama Liwan and Fuguwan Districts. Traditional buildings in which everyday life is shown, of five of the indigenous Taiwanese peoples have been rebuilt in these two districts. A musical theatre in The Naliwan District regularly stages grand traditional performances. An indigenous artist has opened a coffee shop there, selling a wide range of attractive handicrafts.

If you are fit enough, consider taking a hike instead of going by bus. Between the Tama Liwan District and Fuguwan District there is a 1,100-metre-long mountain stairway trail with more than 1,100 steps. Along the 1.5-hour route climbing the mountain, travellers can enjoy a panoramic view of Kaohsiung and Pingtung cities.

☆ The Indigenous Peoples Cultural Park

Add: 104 Beiye Village, Majia Township.

Tel: 886-8-7991219

Opening hours: 08:30—17:00, closed on Mondays

Admission: Adult: NT\$120; students, police, people over 65

years: NT\$60; groups over 30 people: 20% discount

Performance: (weekdays) 10:30, 15:00; (weekends) 10:30, 14:00, 16:00

Website: <http://www.itcp.gov.tw>



4th Stop: Tasting Bluefin Tuna in Dunggang

Transport: All buses from Kaohsiung and Pingtung pass Dunggang Town.

Dunggang has three treasures: the bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*), sakura shrimp (*Sergia lucens* Hansen), and oilfish. The bluefin tuna are rarely seen until the fishing season in April and May, when they swim northward to Kuroshio in Japan and pass Lan Yu (or Yuhyu) and Liudau (or Nanliao) off Taiwan. To search for the eggs of the flying fish, the bluefin tuna alter their swimming depth to 20~30 metres under the sea. This is also the mating season for the fish, and most of them are in prime condition and very meaty. It is said that bidding for the fish has reached as high as NT\$7,000 per *jin* (0.5 kilogram).

The nutritious fish, with its meaty and smooth underbelly, called "toro" by the Japanese, has no fibre and evenly spread fish oils. The middle and sides of the underbelly ("chiu-toro") and the back ("akami") are a first-class source of raw fish slices. The meat also tastes good when cooked using such styles as braising, cooking porridge, stir-frying, baking, stewing or quick-boiling.

After sampling bluefin tuna, one must not miss the nearby Dapung Bay National Scenic Area. It provides an ideal environment for mangroves. A common type is the black mangrove (called "Haijiadong" or "Jiadingshu" by the Taiwanese), or *Avicennia marina* (Forsk.) Vierh. The inland sea is also ideal for oysters. Over the years, the oyster shells have accumulated and formed two small islets. Planktons in the bay attract lots of birds and animals to rest and feed here.



☆ Bluefin tuna cuisine

Recommended eatery:
Rempeng Restaurant

Add: 75~87 Chuantou Road,
Donggang Town. (beside No.
17 Highway)

Tel: 886-8-8322777

Tariff: Bluefin tuna banquets cost from NT\$5,000~6,500. Individual servings NT\$ 800 per person

Remarks: Every May to July, Pingtung County holds the Bluefin Tuna Cultural and Travel Festival.





abundance of marine resources it rapidly rose to become the main centre for seafood in southern Taiwan. Naturally it attracted the attention of invaders. In 1624, the Dutch occupied the island and established a trading base there. Strategically located facing Kaohsiung Harbour, Qijin has witnessed many wars.

From Qijin, one can see Chihou Mountain and across Kaohsiung Harbour, Shoushan Mountain. Once connected, the two mountains were separated by an earthquake, forming an immense gap called Takao, which was the old name for Kaohsiung. During the reign of the Qing Emperor Kangxi (1662 — 1722), six giant cannons were installed at the mouth of the harbour. The cannons we see today were refurbished after the Second World War. Going higher, one can see an old lighthouse, still operational today. Built of brick in 1918, the lighthouse is 15.2 metres high with an octagonal lower part and a black circular tube on the top. The light from its rotating lamp can be seen 47 km away.

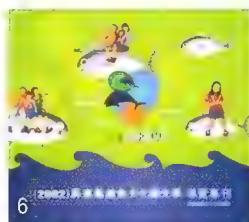
Surrounded by water, Chijin has a 3.5 kilometres coastline, with a public beach, shell museum, sightseeing walking zone and bicycle route. Residents are fond of fishing and swimming here. During typhoons, however, seawater can flood the whole park. The fishing industry is still very important here.

☆ Dapung Bay Ecotourism

Recommended organisation: Rempung Ocean Farm—the Dapung Ecosystem Education Museum

Add/ Tel: (the same as Rempeng Restaurant)

Admission: Adult: NT\$350; groups (companies): NT\$300; groups (school): NT\$250.



Introduction: Natural landscape, ecosystem education museum, three parent-children water playgrounds. With its professionals guides, this place is recommended as an outdoor educational venue by the Sightseeing Association.

☆ Delicacies of Kaohsiung — “Wanke” (glutinous rice dumplings)

Recommended eatery: Tangshan Wanke

Add: 404-13 Lingyayi Road, Kaohsiung

Tel: 886-7-3348482

Tariff: “Wanke”: NT\$30; dark plum soup: NT\$30; rice cooked with minced meat and herbal juice: NT\$20

Introduction: The owner of the eatery is a music lover who can play lots of musical instruments such as the ceramic recorder. Book in advance if you want to watch his performance.



Footnote: Visiting Taiwan again, I was most touched by the hospitality and kindness of the Taiwanese, reinforcing my love for this place.

KAOHSIUNG COUNTY

5th Stop: Viewing Kaohsiung from Chijin

Transport: Many buses go from Pingtung to Kaohsiung. No. 35 from Kaohsiung to Chijin, or No. 1, 31, 50, or 248 to the Gushan Pier, then take a ferry to Chijin. The business hours of the pier: 06:00 — 10:00, 14:30 — 18:30 (weekdays); 06:00 — 22:00 (weekends and public holidays). Fare: NT\$10

Named Chijin (previously Chihou), this island is one of the earliest sites developed around Kaohsiung. Blessed with an

1. The Bununs live by farming and hold many religious ceremonies.
2. *Shanlinde Zuihui* (The Wisdom of the Forest) published by the Indigenous Peoples Committee Cultural Park Management Bureau fully describes the park's facilities and the traditions of Taiwan's 10 minority groups.
3. Miaoqian Road, a famous seafood street in Chijin, is packed with stalls and seafood restaurants.
4. Many species of fish are sold at the fish market in Dunggang.
5. Established in 1927, and designed to look like a boat, the Chijin Ferry Pier operated the first publicly-run ferry transport.
6. A brochure illustrating the features and body structure of the bluefin tuna.
7. The three most famous dishes in Tangshan Wanke Restaurant: glutinous rice dumplings, black plum soup and chicken soup.

A photograph of a child with dark hair, wearing a white tank top and orange shorts, standing on a rocky beach. The child is looking out at the sea, where some driftwood is visible. The background is a green gradient.

HK MOSAIC

Ecotourism in Peng Chau: A Sustainable Development

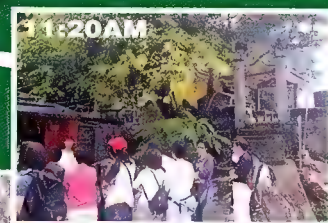
Photo & article by Dianna Lau

In 1992, a high-level conference convened by the United Nations saw conservation of the world's ecological environment as the number one discussion topic for the 21st century. Leaders from over 180 countries recognised that the worsening environmental situation seriously threatened the world's economic development. At the end of the conference, agreement was reached that the strategy for economic development would be based on the principle of "sustainable development" rather than relying on shortsighted investments that ignore the consequences. As the world's largest economic activity, the tourism industry must take the lead!

All along, the principle of "sustainable development" has rarely applied to Hong Kong's tourist industry. The construction of a new scenic area always meant irretrievable devastation of natural and cultural resources.

However, it is good to hear news that ecotourism is finally budding in a small place in Hong Kong — Peng Chau, an outlying island of one square kilometre.

"Sustainable Development Tourism" applies to travel, nature, culture and the human habitat as a whole, and is based on not destroying natural, cultural and other resources, and on fully supporting policies that conserve natural and human ecosystems, so as to promote the sustainable use of tourism resources.



- 10:20 AM — Distributing tourist maps, introducing history of Peng Chau
- 11:00 AM — Former site of China Match Factory
- 11:15 AM — Find Yugin, the plant on the verge of extinction
- 11:20 AM — Temples of 7th Sister, Kwan Ying, and Lai Ja
- 11:40 AM — Visit Tai Lei Island
- 12:15 PM — Investigation of old coral area and Lime Residue Cove
- 12:55 PM — Legend of Kam Fa Temple
- 13:15 PM — Vegetarian lunch
- 14:20 PM — Visit Tin Hau Temple
- 14:40 PM — Historical tablet
- 14:50 PM — Qing dynasty tile roofs at Wing On Street
- 15:15 PM — Explore former site of Victory Lime Kiln
- 15:35 PM — Find Century plant and other herbs
- 16:35 PM — Viewing the sea at the Ends of the Earth and Sea
- 17:00 PM — Panoramic sea view at Finger Hill
- 17:40 PM — Taste fresh underground water in Wai Chai Village
- 17:50 PM — Dismiss at pier

【The Origin of Ecotourism】

The term "Ecotourism" was first coined in 1983 by Mexico's H. Ceballos-Lascurain, a special consultant to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). People began to realise their failure to acknowledge the interdependence between man and the environment inevitably results in environmental degradation. Also known as green travelling, protective travelling, or sustainable development travelling, ecotourism indicates "an intention to appreciate the beauty of nature, as well as express concern for the environment".



☞ The Most Highly Developed Industrial Island in 1960s ☜

It was drizzling on the ninth day of the fourth month according to the Chinese calendar. I went with some friends who lived on an outlying island to another outlying island — Peng Chau — to join an ecotour recently opened for the public. Led by volunteers from the Green Peng Chau Association (GPCA), the organisers of the tour, we were introduced to the island.

We arrived at the Peng Chau ferry pier at 10:15. Miss Chan Lik Fong, the founder of the GPCA, and a few volunteers who had arrived much earlier, greeted us with smiling faces. We formed a team of about 20 people. Following our tour guide's instructions, we moved to an adjacent pavilion where they distributed a nicely-designed bilingual tourist map of the island. Miss Chan also gave a brief introduction to the history and environment of Peng Chau.

I went to Peng Chau unaware that it had been cultivated as early as the New Stone Age. Lime kilns were first developed here in the Song Dynasty (960 — 1279). It became a busy trading centre and fishing port in the Qing Dynasty (1644 — 1911). During the early 20th century, the lime industry here was the biggest of its kind in Hong Kong, and by 1939 the island's Great China Match Factory was the largest match factory in Southeast Asia. In the 1960s Peng Chau was the most highly developed industrial island in Hong Kong.



☞ A Treasure Box of Diverse Life ☜

Some 70 percent of the natural environment and 60 percent of the coastline are well-preserved in Peng Chau, making it a haven for a diversity of living things: 50 kinds of birds, 100-plus insect species, various protophytes and a variety of herbs. According to local fishermen, the sea around Peng Chau was once studded with a colourful coral reef before the 1970s. A report, called "Hong Kong Reef Check", on research conducted by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) indicated there were more than 35 kinds of corals at Peng Chau, many of them rare. The endangered Pink Dolphin sometimes swims around the coastal area here.

We were all absorbed in this idyllic picture. To increase our involvement, Miss Chan asked us to think of a name related to nature, write it on a piece of paper and pin it on our clothes. Consequently piles of "coral", two "clouds", a "rock", a few blades of "grass", a "fish", and some "insects" and "birds" shuttled back and forth following the Peng Chau tour that day.

☞ Glimpses of Peng Chau's History ☜

The Great China Match Factory

Before the popularity of lighters, everyone in Hong Kong was familiar with "Kowloon Matches" (and the smell of gasoline

"Sustainable Development Tourism" had to cater for the increasingly wide-ranging demands of people today,

ensuring the new generation has the right to enjoy these travel resources, and meeting their needs for travel and tourism.

cookers, of course). As a child, I thought they were produced on the mainland. In fact, they were products of the Great China Match Factory on Peng Chau. At its peak, the plant employed 1,000 workers, with its occupying area separated by tablets. There were special rooms where working mothers could feed their children, an evening school, and the first library on Hong Kong's outlying islands. However, the factory closed in the early 1970s. Its prosperity can now only be glimpsed through black-and-white photos.

Lime Kilns / Limestone Residue Cave

Early in the Tang Dynasty (618 — 907), the Chinese people living in Peng Chau learned to utilise the island's resources. They burnt oyster shells and dead coral to make lime, a material used in house building, as a fertilizer, in insecticides, in paper-making or repairing ships. Lime kilns were one of Hong Kong's four primary industries in the 19th century. In the early 20th century, Peng Chau was the biggest lime producer with 11 kiln factories. The industry experienced a downturn in the mid-1950s when challenged by new industries and real estate development. The site of the former lime kiln at Nan Wan is now hidden by grass.



The tour guide found us some of the old sites and explained the history of the building blocks in the walls of some houses. The most precious blocks were white and made from coral, while many other walls were built of broken stones. It is said the most basic methods were used to break the rock used in their construction.

There was once a lime kiln on the coast at Bak Wai Mei. Waste limestone dumped in the sea gradually built up, forming hills. Then, after years of weathering and erosion by the sea, a cave was formed. This is really one of Hong Kong's wonders.

[The Green Peng Chau Association (GPCA)]

Established in 1991, the association is a public non-profit making organisation. Born in Peng Chau and having studied in Britain, Miss Chan Lik Fong founded the association to promote environmental protection and public awareness. She has held seminars on relevant topics, and activities including planting trees and cleaning beaches. She supervises the island's development project aimed at preserving the natural environment.

In recent years, she has actively promoted a sustainable development project called "Green Cultural Island" on Peng Chau. Initiatives for the economic development of Peng Chau include a green market, organic farms, a history trail and an ecosystem awareness trail. Two organic farms are under cultivation now in the area, the Happy Farm in Tai Wo and the Canoe Farm in Tai Long Tsuen (Village). Both are worked by local farmers as well as being open to the public wanting to learn about organic farming.

Previous page: Because of environmental pollution Peng Chau's younger generation has already lost the chance to appreciate live coral reefs.

1. The over 200-year-old Kam Fa Temple is closely associated with the famous martial arts film star Wong Fei Hung.
2. The Eight-Diagram Well beside Kam Fa Temple reveals the high priority of "Fengshui" and the environment in Peng Chau people's minds.
3. A GPCA volunteer explains the history of the Tin Hau Temple: a two-metre-long, 400-year-old whale bone found in the sea and placed inside the temple was regarded by local ancestors as an auspicious symbol.
4. Without trained guides, the Victory Kiln Factory site hidden deep in the grass would not have been found by the public.





Capturing Architectural Features

Qing Dynasty Tiled Roofs in Wing On Street

Wing On Street must be the oldest and busiest street on Peng Chau. For over 200 years, it has been Peng Chau's most important trading centre, and a rendezvous where local people bought food and other daily necessities.

When tourists enter the middle part of Wing On Street, they may find that the sunshine or rain suddenly disappears. Looking up, they will notice tiled roofs overhead. They were built in the Qing Dynasty by the wealthy class to protect pedestrians from wind and rain. The benefactors believed this was a good way to accumulate good fortune.

Eight-Trigram Old Well / Old Well in Wai Chai Village

There are many wells in Peng Chau. A well located near the Kam Fa Temple was built in a shape of Eight Trigrams. Though now abandoned, it once provided water for many residents. Another ancient well is located near the residential area in Wai Chai Tsuen (Village). With the tour guide's



help, we were given a chance to taste its fresh water. Interested people with empty bottles can take away some of the water and afterwards make tea at home.

Myths of Ancient Temples

Tin Hau Temple

The Tin Hau Temple facing the ferry pier is of great importance to Peng Chau. Rebuilt in 1798, the ancient temple enshrines Tin Hau (Goddess of the Sea). I was told that there was once a severe pestilence in Peng Chau. The helpless residents sought help from Mother Tin Hau. The patients were quickly cured. Since then, on the 21st day of the seventh month

(Chinese calendar) every year, the locals hold grand ceremonies to worship the goddess. All the residents, dressed in their best, take part in the event to bless everyone who lives on the island.

Kam Fa Temple

The appearance of the Kam Fa (Golden Flower) Temple is different from any other building of similar function. On close inspection, tourists will find a familiar name written on the board hanging at its entrance — Kwan Tak Hing, the famous martial arts master. Believe it or not, it is said that Master Kwan accomplished some legendary deeds in the temple in 1981. Nowadays he is regarded as a Guardian God of Mother Kam Fa.

Getting to Know Mother Nature

Yuqilin & Century Plant

Yuqilin and Century Plant (*Agave Americana* L.) are on the list of world's plants on the verge of extinction. According to Chinese tradition, they can cure diseases and dispell evils. However, due to rapid urbanisation and a lack of environmental awareness, they are being destroyed unnecessarily during developmental activities and face extinction.

The disappearance of a single plant species may cause loss of habitat for certain birds or insects. Ultimately, it will affect the whole ecosystem, including all human beings. Though we may not be the ones who have to cope with these kinds of disasters, the next generation most certainly will.

After listening to this serious warning, my heart sank. My spirits weren't raised again until I later saw the Century Plant flowering nearby.

Chinese Herbs

Out of all we did that day, the search for Chinese herbs



excited us the most. Each of us was given a photo of a Chinese herb, with its features and curative effects listed on the back. "Hey, isn't this a common roadside plant?" "Look? It can even cure my little ailment!" All of us happily evaluated these treasures.

Field Trip to Former Site of Coral Reef

Before a field trip to the coral reef, we first stopped on a bridge on Tai Lei Island overlooking the construction site of a large theme park due for completion in 2005 — Hong Kong's Disneyland. The seawater in front of me was a strange colour: a greenish blue mixed with muddy yellow. Disgusted by its appearance, I imagined the impact it had on fish, and wondered how fishermen could make a living. And I finally understood the reason for the disappearance of the coral reef. Anything man-made that's damaged can be rebuilt. But this does not apply to Mother Nature. The extinction of this one coral reef means a loss to the whole world. There was no sustainable development here!

Leaving the bridge, we walked together to the coral beach. Carrying a photo of a kind of living coral, each of us had to scour the beach for dead coral similar to the one in the photo. This activity broadened our knowledge of corals as well as inducing sadness over their plight.

After a day packed with activity, there was no more ideal place to stop than the top of Finger Hill. The 360-degree

panorama of the sea and a soothing ocean breeze brought me to a state of readiness to fall into sweet dreams. I no longer heard the tour guide patiently detailing faraway islands; all I wanted was to sink into this unspoiled environment.

Translated by Kristy Wong

1. The appealing view of the "Ends of the Earth and Sea" of Peng Chau.
2. Besides food, Mother Nature provides many herbs that can cure human diseases.
3. The field trip to Tai Lei Island informs tourists about different kinds of coral and their growing conditions. Following the GPCA principle of "not removing what belongs to nature", tourists have to replace the corals at their former sites.

Travel Tips

Transport:

Ferries between Central and Peng Chau every 45 minutes.

Customer service hotline: 2131 8181

There are also ferries or hand-pulled ferry between Discovery Bay, Mui Wo and Shenle Hall on Lantau Island, Sesame Bay and Cheung Chau.

Traditional Festivals in Peng Chau: (subject to lunar calendar)

Birthday of Hung Hsing Ye ~ 13th day of 2nd month

Birthday of Tin Hau ~ 23rd day of 3rd month

Birthday of Kam Fa ~ 17th day of 4th month

Dragon Boat Festival ~ 5th day of 5th month

Birthday of Dragon's Mother ~ 8th day of 5th month

Dramas of Immortals ~ late 5th month

Birthday of 7th Sister ~ 7th day of 7th month

Ghost month activities ~ 12th — 14th days of 7th month

Peace-Hoping Festival ~ 19th — 21st days of 7th month

Worshipping Tin Hau ~ 21st of 7th month

The Day Kwan Tak Hing became the Guardian God ~ 27th of 8th month

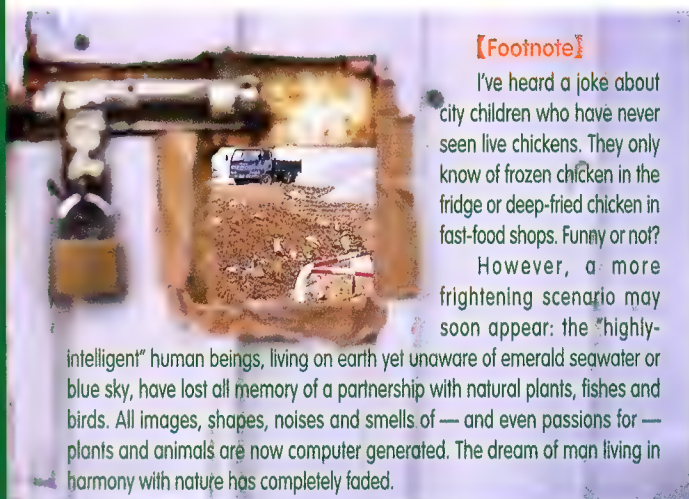
The Green Peng Chau Association

Tel: (852) 2983 8234 Fax: (852) 2983 9149

Website: <http://www.greenpengchau.org.hk>

E-mail: gpengchau@hkbn.net

One-day Ecotour (includes a tourist map, lunch, tour guide service, insurance, and a souvenir): Adult-HK\$ 90; Children or elderly people-HK\$ 60



【Footnote】

I've heard a joke about city children who have never seen live chickens. They only know of frozen chicken in the fridge or deep-fried chicken in fast-food shops. Funny or not?

However, a more frightening scenario may soon appear: the "highly-

intelligent" human beings, living on earth yet unaware of emerald seawater or blue sky, have lost all memory of a partnership with natural plants, fishes and birds. All images, shapes, noises and smells of — and even passions for — plants and animals are now computer generated. The dream of man living in harmony with nature has completely faded.

The Girl at the Foot of Mount Niba

Photos & article by
Huang Yanhong



I was travelling through the Jiuxiang District, near Niba Mountain, in Hanyuan County, West China's Sichuan Province. It was April and Jiuxiang was

welcoming spring. The ripening cherries, looking like bright stars in a green heaven, whetted one's appetite.

My local friend Old Jiang and I were dining at a hotel. The young waitress, dressed in traditional Chinese clothes and with a shy and modest demeanour, kept pouring wine into our glasses. I felt embarrassed and after a while told her we would just serve ourselves.

Her name is Wang Hua. She was 17 years old, and lived in the Fifth Group of Lihua Village in Jiuxiang with her only relative, her grandfather. Her mother left her when she was four. Her father had once traded in curios outside the village. Unfortunately, he was arrested for selling the skin of a Giant Panda. After his release from prison, he kept wandering from place to place.

Wang Hua had lived with her grandfather for years. Under his care she completed her primary education. However, she ultimately stopped studying. Wang didn't have good memories of her father. "When he was in bad mood, he even hit granddad," she said. "As I grew up, I would speak out and stop him."

I thought about Wang Hua's story all night and told Old Jiang I wanted to visit her home. "How about I contact the general manager of the hotel tomorrow and tell him we want to invite Wang Hua to be our model for some photographs of the cherry picking," he replied.

On our second morning, on the way to the cherry garden, I asked if we could visit her home as the light was too dim for photography. "It'll take another hour's walking to reach my home," she answered hesitantly and unwillingly. When we arrived at Jiuxiang Town, Old Jiang said: "Uncle Huang wants to visit your home, can he?" This time, she nodded her head. By now, I was quite embarrassed at being so insistent on visiting a girl's home.

Following her instructions, we drove along a muddy path and the ridges between the pear trees and rice paddies. In the distance was a dilapidated farmhouse. I guessed this must be her home.

Hearing us talking, Wang's grandfather came out from the farmhouse. He was extremely surprised to see Wang Hua and some strangers. As soon as she introduced us, Wang burst into tears. The old man, holding his granddaughter's hand, cried too

The grandfather talked readily. Though in his 70s, he had an excellent memory. In the diary he showed us were recorded all the most important dates in his life. Included were the day he was conscripted for army service 50 years ago, the day the Kuomintang

retreated from the mainland, and the last time Wang Hua saw her father, July 17, 2001.

The fire in the fireplace was smouldering. In the big iron cauldrons were a few pieces of preserved meat, a gift from Wang Hua during the Spring Festival. Wang chided her grandfather for not eating the meat. She would buy him some more when the meat was eaten up.

The small house was so crowded with possessions I could hardly find a place to stand. A smaller room inside was Wang's bedroom. The mosquito net had turned dark grey. Her grandfather had to climb a wooden ladder up to the loft where he slept. There were even more possessions and food stacked in the corner.

Before we left, I took out 200 yuan and a twenty-dollar Hong Kong banknote and gave them to Wang Hua. Tears coursed down her cheeks again, but she only took the banknote and thrust everything else back at me. "Uncle Huang, I will keep this as a memento," she said.

"Every time I return home, I have to buy presents for my daughter who is two years older than you," I told her. "I will continue to help you in the future. So, please just take this 200 yuan to take care of your granddad."

I found my eyes also filling with tears. And Wang Hua began crying even more freely.

Footnote: Leaving Wang Hua's home, we returned to Jiuxiang Town. I wanted to take some pictures alone, so I told Old Jiang I would meet up with him that evening. However, I was reluctant to leave the old stone archways, exquisite stone sculptures, and the simple, hospitable townsfolk.

In the end I booked into an inexpensive hostel. But at 1:30a.m. I was awakened by a series of loud knocks. I opened the door, it was Old Jiang. "I have finally found you!" he said with relief.

He had been looking for me since nightfall. He had rushed to Jiuxiang at midnight, but could not find me in the few, more upmarket hotels. At the police station, the staff told him their supervisor was out because he "had to investigate a murder that happened an hour ago". Old Jiang nearly fainted at the news. His fears didn't evaporate until someone told him the murdered person was about 20 years old.

Next morning, when I returned to Jiuxiang Town again, an old guy who sold baked cakes on the street told me: "We were up looking for you all last night."





1

Scorpion

Photos & article by Helen Li

— a Famous Food in Shandong



2

Shandong dishes have early gained its fame in China. In Linyi, a city in Shandong, there is a dish called “deep-fried scorpions”. Tourists coming from abroad may feel awful, but the locals appraise it as “very delicious”.

Everyone will fear when seeing the poisonous tail of a scorpion raises and the two sharp pliers move. But people living in Shandong are fond of eating scorpion. Deep-fried scorpions has even become a famous dish here. A box of scorpion moon cakes sold at 1,000 yuan per box still attracts many to buy.



The Making of Deep-fried Scorpions

Scorpion produced in Shandong is of high quality. Having washed the killed scorpions, farmers will preserve them in eating salt for a period of time, and sell them out after processing. The making of deep-fried scorpion is like this: Soaking out the salt content in warm water before cooking the scorpions. Then, deep-fry the scorpions in hot oil in a pot until they become fragrant. Place them in a shape like a big living scorpion. It, however, needs great courage to put one into my mouth. After being deep-fried, the original shape of the animal has not been changed. Even the poisonous tail still looks shinny!



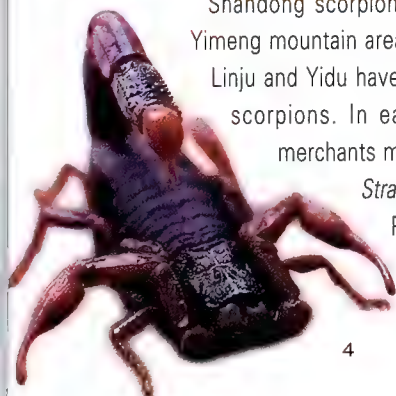
Scorpion in Yimeng Mountain Area

Shandong scorpions are mostly found in places in Yimeng mountain area such as Linju, Yiyuan, and Yidu.

Linju and Yidu have the longest history in producing scorpions. In early Qing Dynasty, there were merchants mass buying scorpions. In the book

Strange Tales from a Make-do Studio by Pu Songling, there are stories about scorpion diners.

The prime time to catch scorpion falls on the period before



4

and after the Grain Rain (the sixth solar term), which is around April 20. The animal is most meaty and clean at this time. After processing, the body of the scorpion can be maintained hard and dry. Having sealed the storing case, the food will not be attacked by mould or insects.



3



Used as Chinese Medicine

According to many Chinese writings, scorpion can be used as a valuable herbal medicine. Information about the animal can be found in the *Classic of Odes*, *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Reign*, the *PLC Pharmacopoeia*, and the *Compendium of Materia Medica*. Records from these book prove that scorpion can repel poison, prevent tic and convulsion, paralysis of the facial nerves, convulsion of blood vessels of the brain, lymph tuberculosis, and painful sore.



Prevent Skin Diseases

The Shandong scorpion also contains more than 10 components including scorpion acid, TMA (Trimethylamine), and betaine. People believe that eating the Shandong scorpion is effective in preventing bacteria from growing on the skin. Perhaps, that is why the Linyi residents are so fond of the food.



- 1, 4. The scorpion remains a lifelike shape after being deep-fried.
2. A few tens of scorpions form a big one, making the famous dish “Deep-fried Scorpions”.
3. Nicely-packed Shandong scorpions is a famous souvenir.

SHARING OF THE TRIP

Unforgettable Friends on the Trip

In August 1993, I quitted my job and went for my first backpack DIY journey with my friends. On the way in the plane to our first destination, Guiyang, capital city of West China's Guizhou Province, we made friends with a 20-something young man from Foshan, a city in Guangdong Province. He had been doing business with his friends for two years. It was already night-time when we arrived Guiyang. He immediately found a hotel for us to lodge, and suggested some routes for us. In the days afterwards, they went to work in daytime and visited us at night to see whether we would need help. When he knew it was peak season of taking the trains, he also called his friends to purchase the sleepers tickets from Guiyang to Chengdu for us. On the day we left Guiyang, they even accompanied with us to the railway station. Until today, I still feel grateful for their caring and help.

Then, in Chengdu we joined the local tours to the Jiuzhaigou and Huanglong. Again, we made friends with four boys from Guangdong on the tour bus. When one of them felt sick, I fetched him some medicine. In order to thank me, he shared his own peaches with us. We then became acquainted and later good friends. Since we joined the locals tours very late, we were arranged to sit in the last row of the car. Once the car crossed over some barriers on the road, our heads "kissed" its top. Seeing this, they exchanged the seats with us. A seven-day tour passed in such a nice atmosphere. When I recall these happy moments, they seem just happened yesterday! Having known for almost 10 years, we still keep contact today.

In a society of rich materials and full of attractions, would the young generation still be so sincere nowadays?

Wen Wen, Panyu, Guangdong

The Passion for Dogs in France

My family sometimes travelled to France at leisure when we lived in London. There were bright sunlight, inexpensive products, as well as culinary foods and wines in France. However, my deepest impression about this country is the passion for dogs of its people.

A Paris friend of mine has said, "You can stride forward with chin up without worrying dogs' droppings on a street in London." Only when I arrived Bordeaux in France, I could understand the meaning of this saying. As my son was intoxicated in the surrounding architectures one day, suddenly, I heard a strange noise from the bottom of his shoe, and the unfriendly smell immediately attacked our noses. Oh, la la! He had stepped on the thing! As we looked around, there were in fact a few more "piles", waiting for careless tourists as if mines.

The coastal town, Biarritz, was however very clean. In an evening in April, we were enjoying the sea breeze. My son suddenly cried out, "Alas, I need to go to the toilet." However, the public toilet was closed already. We then headed to an indoor swimming pool, but we were told that the lavatory was not open for tourists. Hearing that, my son quickly ran away.

He ran here and there, and stopped at a "T"-shape coastal road. It was a sign standing on a small sand pool, showing a lady leading a kneeling dog. The little boy said, "Chinese and dogs were not permitted to enter the mid-level area in Hong Kong in the past, but here man is not as respectable as dogs! See, the animal is free to use this easily-found facility. I have found no lavatories for half day!"

On the way, we are always troubled by the most primitive needs of our bodies. However, we may also learn a lot from the local culture of the destination through these troubles.

Huanyuan, Canada

Contributions Solicited

We are grateful for the warm support of our readers who have sent us their contributions. Please remember that you are always welcome to write to us about your various travel experiences so that you can share them with other readers. You can write about your impressions of a place, episodes of a trip, or encounters during a journey. The story for this column should be no more than 800 words. A full-length story of 1,000-1,500 words with good photos may be published in another column of the magazine, "Traveller's Corner".

Please mail your story to: English Editorial Department, Hong Kong China Tourism Press, 24/F Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or send it via Email: edit-e@hkctp.com.hk.

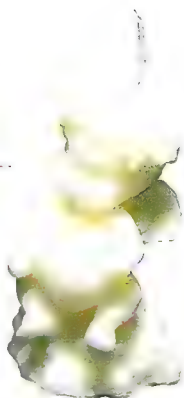
BELOVED SOUVENIRS

Angels from the Philippines

I've recently put down my work and travelled to the Philippines for a few days. My favourite souvenir is a few baby-fat lovely angels. In this Catholic country, I could find these tiny, pretty small angels in shops selling religious portraits or articles easily. The cartoon angels shown in the picture were bought in Paete, a village close to the famous scenic spot Pagsanjan Falls. The village is renowned for providing wood carvings, in which most of them are religious statues. Three angel statues only cost for 55 Pesos, which is just about one U.S. dollar. Some other milky candle angels were bought in an underground mall in front of the Qiapo Church in Malina. They also cost no more than HK\$10.

Since they have "stayed" at my home, whenever I became busy and upset, I would feel untold relieve by looking them for a while. This may be a kind of satisfaction one can get from travelling.

Tropical Fish, Hong Kong



NECESSITY IN THE TRIP

Wong Chai Biscuits

Please don't laugh, for although I am used to go for business trips alone, I always feel lost and miss home being outside more than a week. I have let few of my friends known that since I am not a teenager. Luckily, I have an effective way to make up my soul — seeking for attractive and tasty local snacks. For instance, at the first moment I arrive in the mainland, I will rush to supermarkets and stores, looking for the Wong Chai Biscuits as shown beside. I will buy to a number which I think is enough for the trip, and enjoy the food whenever I want. Sometimes, it is necessary to concern about the environment when I eat it. Once when I was eating the biscuits, this habit was accidentally discovered by my client. He said ironically, "Isn't this the snack of my three-year-old son?" I was only too embarrassed to explain.

Small Cloud, Hong Kong



LODGING TIPS

Naxi Guesthouse in Lijiang

In a trip to Lijiang in northwestern Yunnan I went with my wife two years ago, I have a nice impression about a guesthouse operated by a Naxi family that I stayed with my wife. Called Heshun Hostel, the guesthouse was located at the lower reach of the Lion Hill in Lijiang. It was just a few minute's walk to the Sifang Street, Dayan Town, Lion Hill Park, and Ming-Headman's Mansion.

A building style similar to the Beijingers quadrangle houses, the hostel owns two floors, a west chamber, and a kitchen on the east side. When sunlight shone on the exotic flowers and plants in the morning, I felt exceptional relaxed. The cost for one day was 20 yuan, provided with 24-hour hot water bath, long-distance call service. The restroom was tidy and clean. A pair of father and son, the owners of the guesthouse, were friendly and professional. Having been to lots of places, they were both very talkative. The son, a modern educated youngster, worked hard in the hope to promote their guesthouse a reputable lodging place in Lijiang.

Add: 25 Cuiwen Sect., Xinhua St, Dayan Town, Lijiang, Yunnan Tel: (888) 5123631

Maozi, Hong Kong

FOCUS ON XINJIANG

On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, all providing tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem embedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak, the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uyghur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik,

Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique and colourful culture.



FOCUS ON SHAANXI

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang; the tomb of Tang-dynasty Wu Zetian, China's first empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.



FOCUS ON YUNNAN

The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate all year round. Its capital, Kunming, sitting alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi, has the honourable name of "Spring City". The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-la, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



The Call of China's West

FOCUS ON TIBET

The Tibet Autonomous Region of China is a land of mystery for tourists, a land of wonders for explorers, a land of purity for Buddhists, and the ultimate challenge for mountaineers. Its beautiful landscapes, unique geographical features and rich cultural legacy continue to attract an increasing number of visitors.

The countless attractions of Tibet make it impossible to include them all in one book. This photographic publication offers an introduction to some of the Region's most celebrated features: the Potala Palace and its precious collection of cultural relics; the Jokhang Temple with strings of worshippers prostrating themselves before it; the Shoton Festival and the Sunning of Buddha ceremony; the ruins of the mystical Guge Kingdom; and the amazing Qiangtang Grassland....

At the same time, *Focus on Tibet* outlines the six major routes to Tibet and the many stunning landscapes found along the way.



Paperback Only

FOCUS ON GUIZHOU

Guizhou is a land of splendid natural scenery. Its towering mountains and karst landforms team up with the gurgling rivers and magnificent waterfalls to form a wonderful work of Mother Nature. Huangguoshu Waterfalls and the limestone caves are the province's most frequented scenic spots. The 17 ethnic groups living in the picturesque province further colour the land with vivid customs and joyous festivals. It is its natural beauty and culture that make Guizhou a perfect travel destination.



FOCUS ON GUANGXI

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the diverse traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.



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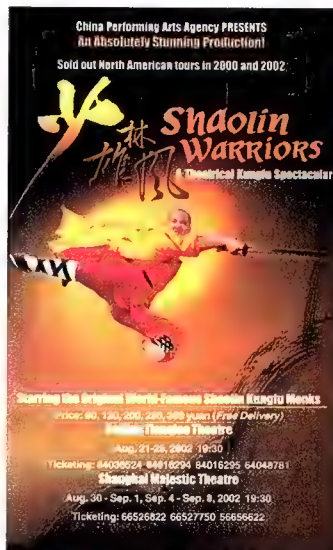
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SEPTEMBER



21/8~8/9

Having entertained over 180,000 people in the world, the "Shaolin Warriors" is performed by world famous Shaolin monks who come from the Songshan Shaolin Temple in Central China's Henan Province. The performances combine the agility and grace of gymnasts, flying fists, war whoops and terrifying weaponry. Inquiry nos.: Beijing Tianqiao Theatre: (10) 8403 6524/ Shanghai Majestic Theatre: (21) 6652 6822

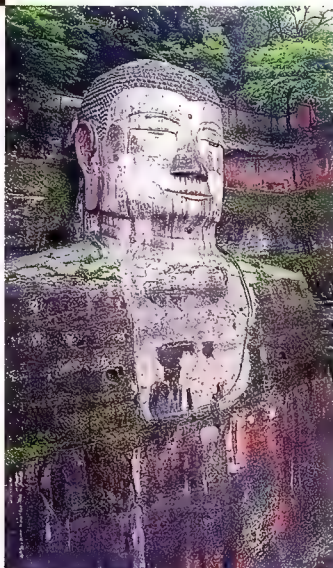


1-8/9

The country's sixth largest trade show — the **11th Urumqi Trade Fair** is to be held in the capital city of Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The fair is to offer more than 200 co-operative and investment projects to both foreign and domestic investors, covering agriculture, light industry, foods, pharmaceuticals, machinery, chemicals, construction materials and infrastructure and tourism facilities, according to Zhang Zhou, vice-chairman of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

1-3/9

Celebrating the 1,200th anniversary of Leshan Giant Buddha will be the most important schedule in the **Fourth International Tourism and Grand Buddha Festival** held in Leshan, Southwest China's Sichuan Province. Jointly organised by the State Administration Tourism, the Ministry of Construction and Sichuan provincial government, the event will also invite Sino-foreign experts to give ideas in preserving the relic.



5~7/9

Jointly sponsored by the State Environmental Protection Administration and the Dalian city government, the **2002 China Environmental Protection Expo** will own 700 booths which cover 14,000 sq m. The expo will show the progress in environmental protection, equipment and technology and environmentally friendly products. Seminars on the environmental protection industry will also be held. Venue: Dalian Xinghai Conventional & Exhibition Centre, Liaoning Province.



1-6/9

Exhibiting over 20,000 types of small commodities under 12 categories, the **First China International Small Commodities Trade Fair** will run in Changchun, capital of Northeast China's Jilin Province. Co-held by the China Individual Labourers' Association, Changchun Municipal Government, about 1,400 booths and business people from over 10 countries and regions including Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia and Singapore will attend the fair.

30/9~5/10

The **First National Ikebana Contest** is to be held in Tianjin, a port city near the country's capital. Participants will be selected from different provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. The winners will join future international competitions. The event is expected to show the progress of China's floral industry. Ikebana, Japanese art of flower arranging, was first introduced in Japan in the sixth century by Chinese Buddhist missionaries.

July~Sept.

Held in Beijing, the three-month exhibition of Spanish surrealist master **Eugenio Salvador Dali** (1904 — 1989) features 374 works including 344 paintings, 37 sculptures, 13 artworks made of gold, bronze and glass, and six lamps and lanterns. The event is the largest of its kind in Asia. The exhibits will also be displayed in Shanghai and Hong Kong later. The genius had also written several autobiographies that reveal his thinking and life.





Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
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	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
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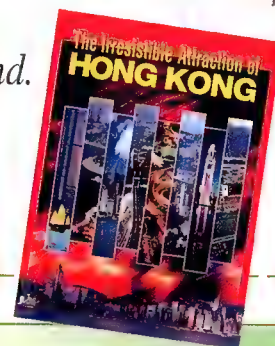
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Hotels in Hainan

City	Name	Star	Address	Tel (898)	Fax (898)
Haikou	Golden Coast Lawton Hotel	*****	68 Renmin Avenue, Haikou	6259888	6258889
	Hainan Mandarin	*****	18 Wenhua Rd, Haikou	6854888	6854045
	Huandao Tide Hotel	*****	18 Peace Ave, Haikou	6268888	6265588
	Bao Hua Harbour View Hotel	****	Binhai Rd, Haikou	8536699	8535358
	Bayview Hotel	****	8 Bayview Rd, Haikou	6798100	6799202
	Haikou Int'l Financial Hotel	****	29 Datong Rd, Haikou	6773088	6772113
	Yantai Int'l Hotel	****	18, 5th East Haidian Rd, Haikou	6250888	6270533
	Haikou Tower Hotel	***	Binhai Rd, Haikou	6772990	6773966
	Hong Yun Hotel Hainan	***	15 Haixiu Rd, Haikou	67799888	67711816
	Nantian Hotel	***	Airfield Rd W, Haikou	6774888	6772055
	Seaview Int'l Hotel	***	Haikou	66773381	66773101
Sanya	Gloria Resort	*****	Yalong Bay, Sanya	8568855	8568533
	Holiday Inn Resort	*****	Yalong Bay, Sanya	8565666	8565688
	Palm Beach Resort & Spa	*****	Yalong Bay, Sanya	88331888	88330001
	Resort Horizon	*****	Yalong Bay, Sanya	8567888	8567890
	Hyton Hotel Sanya	****	Great East Sea, Sanya	88211666	88211555
	Pearl River Garden Hotel	****	Great East Sea, Sanya	88211888	88211999
	Resort Golden Palm	****	Yalong Bay, Sanya	8569988	8569999
	Sanya Shanhaitian Hotel	****	Great East Sea, Sanya	8211688	8211988
	South China Hotel	****	Great East Sea, Sanya	88219888	88214005
	Tian Hong Resort	****	Yalong Bay, Sanya	8550088	8550066
	Cactus Resort Sanya	***	Yalong Bay, Sanya	8568866	8568867
	Yalong Bay Underwater World	***	Yalong Bay, Sanya	88565588	8567788
	Binhai Hotel	***	1 Longkunbei Rd, Haikou	6795033	6797632
	Yu Huayuan Seaview Hotel	***	Luling Rd, Great East Sea, Sanya	88228888	88228990
	Sanya Pearl Seaview Hotel	***	Great East Sea, Sanya	8213838	8215822
Qiongsan	Crowne Plaza Spa & Beach Resort	*****	1 Qiongsan Avenue, Qiongsan	65966888	65960666

Flights to and from Haikou

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Bangkok — Haikou	4 7	1240	1455	CZ3053
Haikou — Bangkok	4 7	0910	1140	CZ3053
Hangzhou — Haikou	1 4 7	2110	2325	CZ3881
	1 5	2020	2240	MU5349
	1 4 7	1250	1545	CJ6389
	1 5	2130	2305	F65961
	3 7	1055	1330	HU7161
	7	1700	1905	HU7189
Haikou — Hangzhou	1 4 7	1805	2010	CZ3881
	1 5	2200	2355	MU5349
	1 4 7	1635	1910	CJ6389
	1 5	2350	0250	F69612
	3 7	0730	1005	HU7161
	7	0735	0925	HU7189
Huhhot — Haikou	7	1340	1905	HU7189
	6	1500	2005	HU7537
Haikou — Huhhot	7	0735	1300	HU7189
	6	0930	1410	HU7537
Kunming — Haikou	2 5 7	1055	1225	CZ3431
	4	1655	1815	SZ4375
	7	1710	1830	SZ4375
	1 3 4 6 7	1350	1520	3Q4385
	1 3 6 7	1020	1150	HU7187

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Haikou — Kunming	2 5 7	0820	1005	CZ3431
	3 7	1035	1200	SZ4376
	1 3 4 6 7	1600	1740	3Q4385
	1 3 6 7	0755	0925	HU7187
Macao — Haikou	3 6	1555	1645	CZ3045
	1 3 4 7	1215	1335	NX 172
	6	1305	1425	NX 172
Haikou — Macao	3 6	1405	1455	CZ3045
	1 3 4 7	1425	1540	NX 172
	6	1515	1630	NX 172
Singapore — Haikou	7	0420	1000	CZ3098
Haikou — Singapore	6	1730	2310	CZ3097
Urūmqi — Haikou	7	1700	2350	HU7355
Haikou — Urūmqi	7	0800	1410	HU7355
Xiamen — Haikou	1 4 7	2110	2225	CZ3837
	2 5 7	1605	1820	MF8303
	1 5	1640	1910	HU7191
	7	1620	1805	HU7291
	1 2 4 5 6	2130	2310	HU7427
Haikou — Xiamen	1 4 7	1505	1620	CZ3837
	2 5 7	1910	2145	MF8303
	1 5	1410	1605	HU7191
	7	0820	1000	HU7291
	1 2 4 5 6	1010	1250	HU7427

Flights to and from Sanya

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing — Sanya	1 2 3 4 5 6	1505	2045	CZ3103
	2 5 7	1730	2150	CJ6367
	2 4 6	1710	2230	CJ6812
	2 4 6	1710	2200	CJ6714
	3 5 7	0430	0920	CJ6716
	2 5 7	2150	2355	CJ6781
	1 3 5 7	1710	2230	CJ6812
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1400	2215	HU7270
	2 4 6	2000	2350	HU7581
	1 2 3 4 5 6	0845	1235	XW 181
Sanya — Beijing	1 2 3 4 5 6	0850	1410	CZ3103
	2 5 7	2245	0325	CJ6368
	2 4 6	0730	1210	CJ6811
	2 4 6	0730	1210	CJ6713
	2 4 6	1700	2200	CJ6715
	2 5 7	1720	2120	CJ6781
	1 3 5 7	0730	1210	CJ6811
	1 2 3 4 5 6	0630	1320	HU7269
	2 4 6	1830	2230	HU7581
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1325	1725	XW 181
Chengdu — Sanya	1 2 3 4 5 6	2120	2320	SZ4707

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
	1 5	1955	2220	CJ6787
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1930	2130	3U 357
	7	0955	1225	HU7245
Sanya — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6	2350	0205	SZ4707
	1 5	1700	1905	CJ6787
	1 2 3 4 5 6	2200	2355	3U 357
	7	0650	0910	HU7245
Hong Kong — Sanya	1 2 3 4 5 6	2035	2150	CZ3029
	5 7	1855	2025	KA 650
Sanya — Hong Kong	1 2 3 4 5 6	1820	1935	CZ3029
	5 7	2125	2255	KA 650
Lanzhou — Sanya	2 5 6	1120	1435	CJ6407
	2 4 6	1600	2220	CJ6738
Sanya — Lanzhou	2 5 6	0730	1040	CJ6407
	2 4 6	0830	1510	CJ6737
Shanghai (Pudong) — Sanya	2 4 6	1950	2300	MU5389
	2 4 6	1845	2305	CJ6752
	1 3 5 7	1815	2230	CJ6754
Sanya — Shanghai (Pudong)	2 4 6	2330	0230	MU5389
	2 4 6	0805	1205	CJ6751
	1 3 5 7	0755	1205	CJ6753

* For reference only.

Airline codes:

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MU = China Eastern Airlines

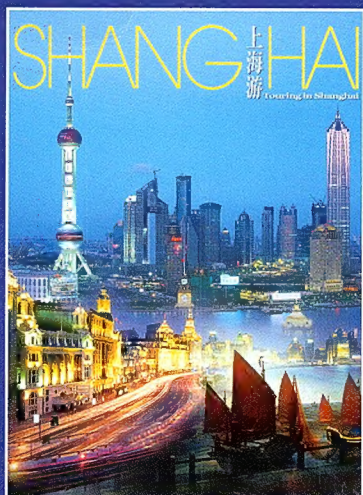


- In the reign of the Kaiyuan in Tang Dynasty (618 — 907), there was an imperial prince called Jinqiaojue in the Xinluo Country (today's Korea). He later entered the China territory and became a monk on the Jiuhua Mountain in Anhui Province. Having died at the age of 99, his body remained not decomposed even three years afterwards. Pilgrims believed that he was the reborn Buddha, hence built a pagoda to memorise him. Since then, **Mount Jiuhua** is regarded as one of the four famous Buddhist mountains in China. More, our correspondent is going to bring you to the ancient **Huizhou** town, the birthplace of Anhui culture, and some other villages that have been inscribed as heritages by the UNESCO. Be soaked in a world of antique Chinese tastes in next Feature.
- It sounds really dangerous and impossible to **ride a bicycle to Tibet**. One will never know what are lying ahead in the remote canyons and mountainous areas. However, many desperados still risk their lives in achieving

this arduous route. Like the reader of next Traveller's Corner, who left from Kunming to the Qomolangma Base Camp in Tibet. In a trip of 57 days, he has finished a long way of nearly 3,000 km. During the hardest times, he has experienced sickness and begging. However, he has also gained much more care from strangers. It may be a courageous story to ignite your desire of seconding his mission.

- Just 20 years ago, **Hailing Island** in western Guangdong was a paradise only known by artists. The long stretching beaches, deafening waves, strange rocks, and traditional fishing lives were all attractions. Today, the place has silently become a well-known tourist destination among travellers. People come here to have fun with the water and many other new activities. Photo buffs have almost outnumbered the painters. In Excursion, our correspondent shows us the new exciting Hailing Island while recalling his past memories of the place.

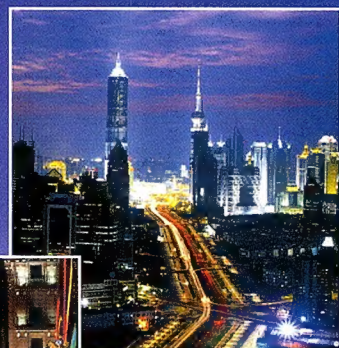
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